

NASH

COUNTRY FOR LIFE | JULY 27, 2015

Country Weekly

NEW LOOK!

**SHANIA
TWAIN**
MAKES LONG-
AWAITED
RETURN TO
MUSIC CITY

NASH
NEXT
SPOTLIGHT
ARTIST
**ASHLEY
MONROE**

SILVER & GOLD

ALAN JACKSON LOOKS
BACK ON 25 YEARS OF
MUSIC AND A LIFETIME
OF "LIVIN' ON LOVE"

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INSIDE!

**DWIGHT
YOAKAM**
HITS NEW
CAREER
MILESTONE

**TRISHA
YEARWOOD'S**
UNVEILING AT
COUNTRY MUSIC
HALL OF FAME

**BILLY
CURRINGTON**
HOW HE
GETS AWAY
FROM IT ALL



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1995 SATURDAY, JULY 22



Start of Something Big

Hard to believe, but it's been 20 years since **SHANIA TWAIN** scored her first No. 1 single, "Any Man of Mine." Written by Shania and her then-producer/husband, Mutt Lange, "Any Man of Mine" rode to the top on July 22, 1995. Fans gravitated to the song's sassy assertiveness (*Any man of mine better walk the line*) combined with a playful attitude, with Shania stating that her guy should throw her compliments even on bad-hair days. "Any Man of Mine" officially kicked off the Shania phenomenon in America, with subsequent singles "You Win My Love" and "No One Needs to Know" also hitting No. 1 and her album *The Woman in Me* going on to sell an amazing 12 million copies. And yet, no one could have seen any of this coming. Shania's first two singles in 1993 barely cracked the 50s on the charts. But "Any Man of Mine" changed the game for good.

2015

JULY 21: SMO-KIN SHOW

Tennessee-based country rapper **BIG SMO** rolls out Season 2 of his A&E original series, fittingly titled *Big Smo*, on July 21.



JULY 23: BIRTHDAY SUITOR



Send your birthday congrats to **NEIL PERRY** of **THE BAND PERRY** as he

celebrates his 25th on July 23. The trio's mandolin player was born on July 23, 1990, in Jackson, Miss.

JULY 23-26: THUNDERSTRUCK

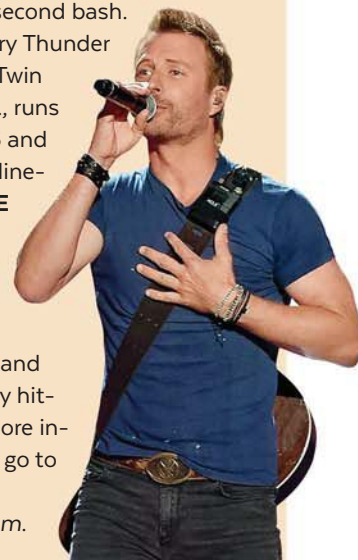
COUNTRY THUNDER

If you missed the first Country Thunder music festival in Arizona earlier this year, there's still time to catch the second bash.

The Country Thunder festival in Twin Lakes, Wis., runs July 23-26 and features a line-up of **LUKE BRYAN**,

DIERKS BENTLEY, **BLAKE**

SHELTON and other heavy hitters. For more information, go to countrythunder.com.



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After 25 years, **ALAN JACKSON** still keeps it country to the bone on his new album, *Angels and Alcohol*.

PLUS!

**NASH
NEXT**

27 She's been an industry fave for years, but now **ASHLEY MONROE** is catching fire with the mainstream public. Ashley reveals some of the stories and details behind her latest album, *The Blade*.



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Alan by Rick Diamond/Getty Images; Ashley by Joseph Lanes/WMG Nashville on cover; Alan courtesy Schmidt Relations

BRAND NEW MUSIC FROM COUNTRY SUPERSTAR

ALAN JACKSON

ANGELS and ALCOHOL



FEATURING
“JIM AND JACK AND HANK”
AND
“THE ONE YOU’RE WAITING ON”

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FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Readers,

This year Alan Jackson has been celebrating his 25 years in country music. He was the subject of an exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, launched his Keepin' It Country Tour in January and now he's released a new album called *Angels and Alcohol*. How many of us have been eagerly awaiting new music from Alan? Well, now we are getting it. Alan sat down with us to talk about the new music and staying true to himself. As

Alan's tour name suggests, he is in fact keepin' it country with this album, and that's why he has a 25-year career to celebrate. So check out our cover story on page 40 and see how Mr. Traditional keeps us wanting more.

We also bring you great stories on Billy Currington, who tells us about getting away from it all; Trisha Yearwood, who unveils her Country Music Hall of Fame exhibit, wedding dress and all; the Halfway to Hazard guys, who get serious about their past and look forward to the future, and so much more.

Check out our subscription deal on page 5. You can get *Nash Country Weekly* delivered right to your mailbox at a discounted rate. You don't want to miss out on this offer.

Don't miss next week's issue, on stands July 27, as we check out Tim McGraw and the 21 best-dressed men in country music.

SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

LISA KONICKI, EDITOR IN CHIEF

SWIFT EXIT

I am a subscriber to your magazine. Why are you still putting Taylor Swift in it? She's not country and, in my opinion, NEVER WAS! Please put articles on Barbara Mandrell, Darryl Worley, Tanya Tucker, Tracy Lawrence, etc. Thank you!



ANNETTE TRAVIS
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

EDITOR'S REPLY:

Thank you for your letter, Annette. To us, Taylor Swift started in country music and will always be a part of it, so we just like to keep tabs on our girl as she stretches her wings. However, we have recently featured Tanya Tucker and her new music and we'll continue to catch you up on the others you suggested as opportunities arise.

LOOKING GOOD

Just wanted to say kudos on the new look. However, I don't think the charts should have been changed. I enjoyed them just the way they were. I liked seeing how all of my favorite albums and songs were doing, instead of just seeing the Top 10. Just wondering if the Top 30 could return. That'd be great. Otherwise, love the new look!



RYAN MATHEWS
South Bend, Ind.

EDITOR'S REPLY:

Thank you, Ryan, I appreciate your letter. After numerous letters such as yours, we have returned the Top 25 to the charts page with this issue. See page 56.

FROM THE READER



CORRECTION: In Then & Now in our June 29 issue, we stated that Scooter Carusoe was the writer of "Better as a Memory." We left out the fact that Lady Goodman was also a writer of the song. NCW regrets the error.

TWITTER

Such a fun first Fan Club Party at #CMAFest this year...thank you for featuring it @countryweekly!!



LINDSAY ELL
@lindsayell

@countryweekly with a great write up about @lindsayell and her fan club party! #wildhorsetN #cmafest #fanclub



WILDHORSE SALOON
@wildhorsetN

FACEBOOK

I would love to be invited to Willie Nelson's picnic or go for a ride on his tour bus! Would be so honored.



LINDA CARNLEY

I Will Definitely Pick This Copy Up. Darius Is One Of My Faves.



ANNALEE BAILEY

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**NASH Country
Weekly**

COUNTRY FOR LIFE

FIRST TAKE

BIG WINNERS

The Swon Brothers dropped by Nashville's Winners Bar & Grill to take part in ACM Lifting Lives Music Camp's karaoke night. The camp aids in the study of the neurodevelopmental disorder Williams syndrome while providing music enrichment through performance and education.



photo by Rick Diamond/Academy of Country Music



THE COUNTRY BREW

A SWEET TASTE OF ALL THINGS COUNTRY

Opening Act



AN ENCHANTED EVENING

In addition to being Harry Potter's birthday (seriously, go look it up), July 31 will be magical for a whole other set of reasons when **SHANIA TWAIN** brings her Rock This Country Tour to Nashville's Bridgestone Arena. As with many of the shows on the 48-city trek, it will be Shania's first concert in Nashville in more than a decade. Fans will no doubt be ready to see what thrills from her acclaimed Las Vegas show, *Still the One*, will be along for the ride this time. "This is a celebration tour. It's party time! The Rock This Country Tour will have a different spirit than my past tours," Shania says. "It's a Shania they've never seen before. A lot of years have gone by and I've got a lot more to share."

Illustration by Ryan Simanek



(Clockwise from above) **SAY CHEESE** Laura Bell Bundy (left) and president of Fox Theatricals Kristen Caskey have some self-ie fun at the Tony Awards Gala in New York City; **ALL FOR ONE** Jennifer Nettles (center), who starred in *Chicago* on Broadway earlier this year, cozies up with fellow entertainers (from left) Nick Jonas, Kelsey Grammer, Sting and Kiesza at the 2015 Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall; **SHACK ATTACK** Tim McGraw (left), Sam Worthington and Radha Mitchell prep for a scene on the set of the new movie *The Shack*.





(Clockwise from above) **FLAMEWORTHY** Kix Brooks (left) presents the Jack Adams Award to head coach Bob Hartley of the Calgary Flames during the 2015 NHL Awards; **OUT ON PAROLE** While making an appearance on *The View*, Kacey Musgraves ran into *Orange Is the New Black*'s Crazy Eyes, better known as Uzo Aduba, backstage; **SELFIE ON THREE** Hard to believe they fit everyone in, but Taylor Swift (center) and Little Big Town managed to squeeze closely for the shot. The LBTers were in Pittsburgh and made a surprise appearance during Taylor's 1989 World Tour stop.



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(Clockwise from left) **FAN-TASTIC MEETING** The guys from A Thousand Horses meet and greet their smallest fans during CMA Music Festival in Nashville; **TALK TO THE HAND** Jerrod Niemann let his Twitter followers know that it was 5 o'clock somewhere as he started his weekend; **SIX IS A CROWD** Larry Stewart of Restless Heart works his way onto the golf cart, making himself comfortable on Luke Bryan's lap. Meanwhile Little Big Town is just along for the ride as they navigate backstage at LP Field after their performances; **ON TOP OF OLE SMOKY** Dierks Bentley gets a firsthand look at how Ole Smoky Tennessee moonshine is made. Are you ready to dive in, Dierks?; **CAMO MAN** Tyler Farr makes it hard for the stuffed animals to see him coming as he attempts to win at the claw game.



SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Looking for a more intimate concert experience than the impersonal mega-arena show? **MUSIC WITH FRIENDS** has your answer. The organization, which started a few years ago in Charlotte, N.C., books artists like **THE DOOBIE BROTHERS**, **HEART**, **DARIUS RUCKER** and many others in smaller venues to create a hassle-free experience for its members. Their recent event at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville starred **BONNIE RAITT** in an intimate performance with her band before about 400 fans. Bonnie played her best-loved hits, like “Something to Talk About” and “I Can’t Make You Love Me,” and also surprised the audience by bringing out



Bonnie Raitt entertained the crowd at the Country Music Hall of Fame, while (below) Michaelis performed at the concert's after-party.



JOHN PRINE for a special duet. The sibling group **MICHAELIS** performed at the concert's after-party.

Music With Friends offers membership to individuals for an annual fee. The organization has expanded to Charleston, S.C., and Houston, with likely more cities to be added. The next Nashville event takes place Oct. 26 and stars **KENNY LOGGINS**. To find out more about Music With Friends, visit musicwithfriends.com.



DWIGHT'S RADIO DAY

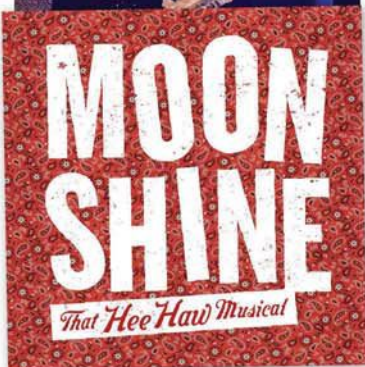
DWIGHT YOAKAM was the main man in the spotlight at the 41st annual Country Radio Hall of Fame Dinner and Awards ceremony on June 24 at the Omni Hotel in Nashville. Dwight was honored with the 2015 Artist Career Achievement Award for his contributions to the country radio format.

Following a brief video presentation of his performances and career stats, Dwight took the podium to offer his thanks for the prestigious honor, which has been awarded in past years to such stars as George Strait and Vince Gill. “I haven’t gotten a lot of awards,” said Dwight, sporting his trademark cowboy hat. “I’ve had a great run, and one thing I did have was great support from country radio.”

Dwight also recalled his fascination with country radio from a young age. “Radio was and is magic to my ears,” he told the crowd of industry professionals, media and other invited guests. “Thank you for being that voice in my ear. And thank you for honoring me tonight.”

Corn Stars

The world of musical theater will likely never be the same when **MOONSHINE: THAT HEE HAW MUSICAL** debuts at Dallas Theater Center on Sept. 2. Hit songwriters **SHANE McANALLY** and **BRANDY CLARK** collaborated on the score for the production, which will feature the talents of newly



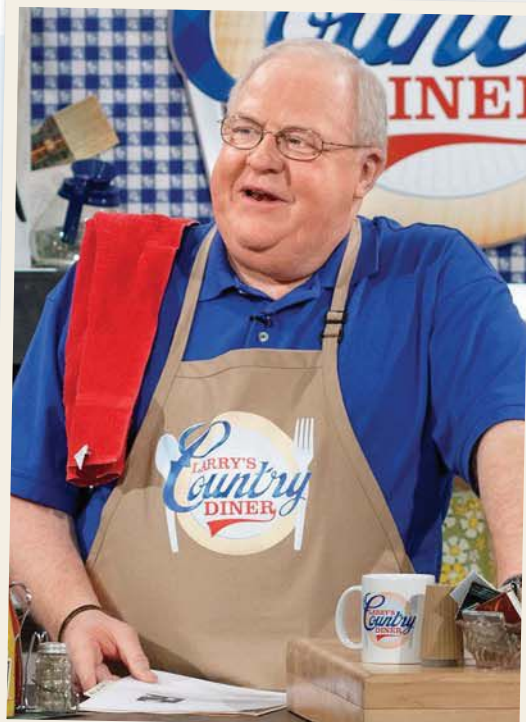
announced cast members Justin Guarini, Rose Hemingway, Ken Clark, Ryah Nixon, Rob Morrison, Kevin Cahoon and PJ Benjamin, plus additional roles occupied by Mackenzie Bell, John Campione, Travis Coombs, Leslie Flesner, Julie Johnson, Kate McMillian, Harris Milgrim and Adam Perry. With direction from Gary Griffin and choreography by Denis Jones, the show will cast the classic variety television program in an entirely new light. Tickets for the performances, which will run through Oct. 11, are on sale now at dallastheatercenter.org.

MOONSHINE ON THE RADIO

FIVE COUNTRY SONGS MOVED BY THE SPIRIT:

1. "White Lightning" George Jones
2. "Mountain Dew" Willie Nelson
3. "Copperhead Road"

- Steve Earle
4. "Daddy's Moonshine Still" Dolly Parton
5. "Moonshine in the Trunk" Brad Paisley



Get-Well Wishes

Healing wishes go out to *Larry's Country Diner* host **LARRY BLACK**. The good-natured creator of the hit variety show suffered several injuries, including a broken back and punctured lungs, when he was involved in an ATV accident in June. According to the show's Facebook page, surgery was required to repair his broken back, and, as of late June, he was removed from the ventilator and breathing on his own. **RANDY LITTLE** of PFI/Bootdaddy was also injured in the accident, but has been released and continues to recover at home. Get well soon, fellas!

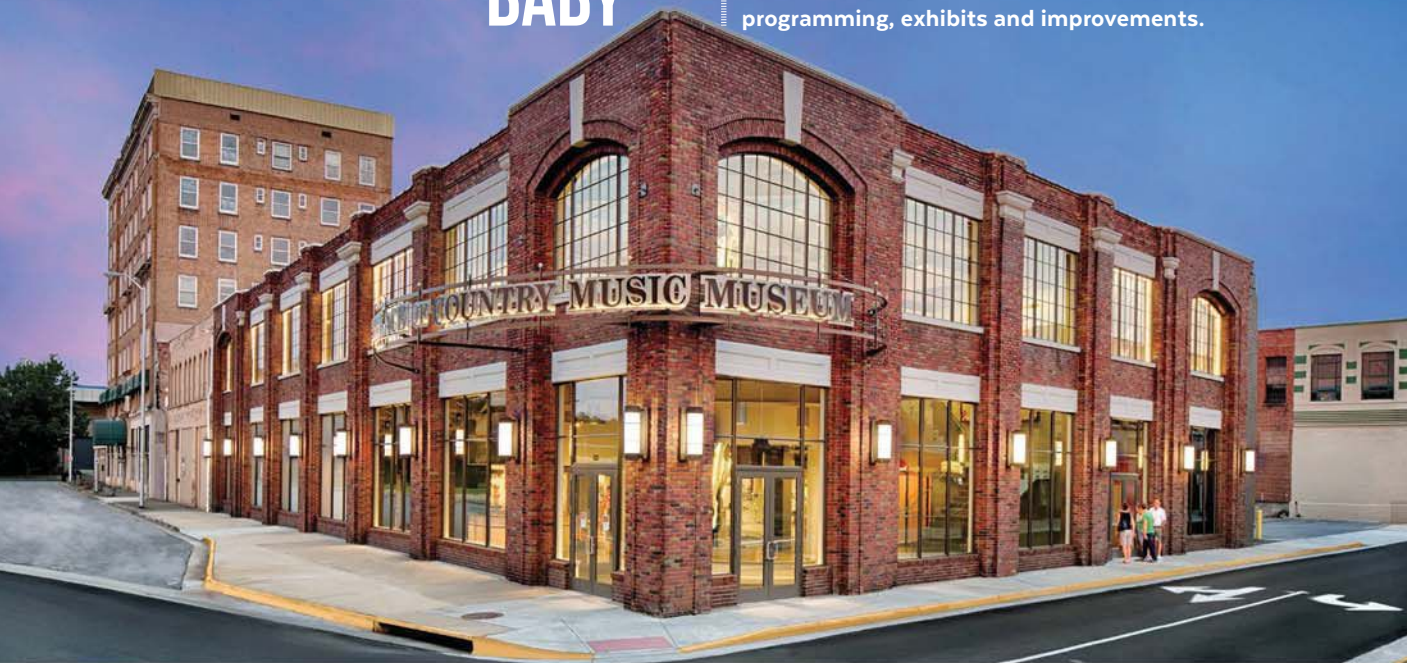


Jonesing for Shine

GEORGE JONES' signature brand of **WHITE LIGHTNING** moonshine took home a big honor at the 2015 Spirit International Prestige Awards. George's Apple Pie moonshine was awarded the platinum medal for Unaged Flavor Infused Whiskey/Moonshine. This is the first year spirits from George's line, which are available exclusively at Nashville's George Jones Museum, were entered in the competition.

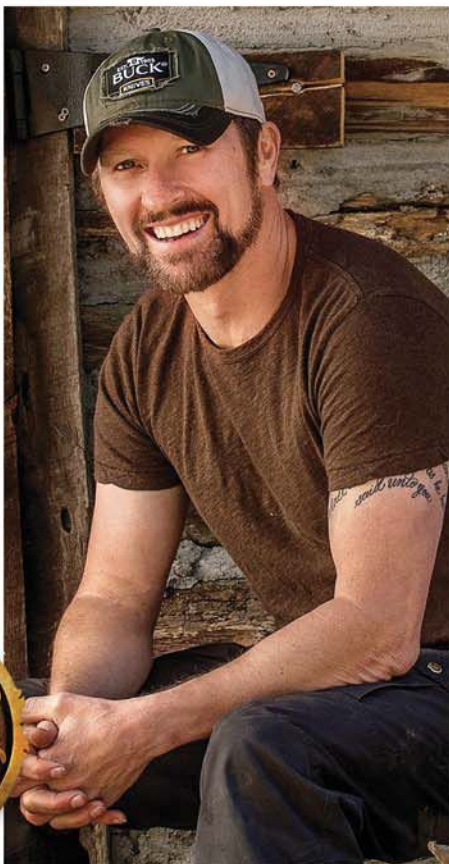
MILLION DOLLAR, BABY

THE BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTRY MUSIC MUSEUM in Bristol, Tenn., is getting a handsome donation in the amount of \$1 million from the McGlothlin Foundation and the United Company Charitable Foundation. The foundations agreed to jointly provide the gift over the next three years, which the museum will use for programming, exhibits and improvements.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

CRAIG MORGAN's bags are packed and he's gearing up for a sixth season of his hit TV show *Craig Morgan: All Access Outdoors*. This season, Craig and his crew will take part in the annual Opry hunt, as well as an African safari. They'll also go king salmon fishing and rafting in Alaska. The multiple Golden Moose award-winning *Craig Morgan: All Access Outdoors* airs on Sundays at 11 p.m. ET.



SAM THE MAN

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum recently announced a major exhibit focusing on the life and work of **SAM PHILLIPS**, the Sun Records



founder, producer and American music visionary who worked with **JOHNNY CASH, JERRY LEE LEWIS** and **ELVIS PRESLEY**, among others.

Titled *Flyin' Saucers Rock & Roll: The Cosmic Genius of Sam Phillips*, the exhibit, which opens on Aug. 28 and runs through June 12, 2016, will feature vintage video and audio clips, rare acetates and family photos as well as original equipment used by Sam. In addition to the exhibit, a new biography about Sam by author/historian Peter Guralnick will be published on Nov. 10.

KICKIN' IT | KIX BROOKS Q&A with WADE HAYES

KIX: Where do you live?

WADE: I live between Mount Juliet and Lebanon [Tennessee].

KIX: Oh, OK, and you have 11 acres?

WADE: Yeah.

KIX: And what do you do on 11 acres?

WADE: Nothing right now. I intended to get cows. I was trying to find things that made me happy, and growing up with all that stuff made me happy. We always had pigs, chickens and cows. But I ended up getting really busy. I haven't even had time to fence the place.

KIX: How many cows can you put on 11 acres?

WADE: You can probably get away with five or six here. In Oklahoma,

you can get away with two. A cow per five acres is normally what the standard is, but here I think you can get away with five or six.

KIX: Well you can name them, like Dinner or T-Bone.

WADE: When I was a kid, we always named them like that, you know, Pork Chop, Bacon, Hamburger. Yeah, everyone around me has cows and horses except for me.

KIX: You need to come out to the farm. I got a pretty decent herd of Beefmasters out there.

WADE: Do you really?

KIX: Yeah, I got about 60 head.

WADE: That's a pretty good herd.



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MENTION CODE **COUNTRYWEEKLY** FOR SPECIAL SAVINGS

White on White



Our favorite country stars sizzle in the summer's coolest hue—white. And the pearly pigment isn't just for the ladies. The gents are wearing it, too. We consulted stylist to the stars **MILTON WHITE** for his tips on how to wear white right.

1 All-white outfits are a huge trend for spring/summer 2015. Style your looks with a mix of textures, shades and layers. One way to keep it edgy is to anchor the look with black, nude or metallic footwear and accessories.

2 Wedding-inspired looks showed up on many major runways and were re-imagined in beautiful ways. Best way to embrace this is a white lace mini-dress.

3 If you like your whites with a side of color, try pairing or layering them over gingham. Anchor your look with white footwear and accessories.

4 White paired with black may be a fashion classic, but it's on trend this season. To make it fresh, try not to balance the look—wear more white than black, or pair a white piece with a black/white piece and add accents in red, gold or silver. If black and white is too stark, try blue and white.

5 Key silhouettes to look for in white: culottes paired with blazers, tailored button-down shirts and high heels, polo shirts and kimono-styled trench coats.



(From top, left to right) Dierks Bentley, Jake Owen, Sam Hunt, The Band Perry's Kimberly Perry, Maddie & Tae's Maddie Marlow, Ashley Campbell, and Ashley Monroe

Ashley M. and Maddie by Curtis Hilbun/AF; Dierks and Sam by CF Images/SPACE/Corbis; Jake by AdMedia/Corbis; Ashley C.; Kimberly by Jason Merritt/Getty Images; Milton courtesy Milton White



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mission at Stauer, so we priced our Aquamarine Ice Ring so you can make a splash without shelling out too many clams.

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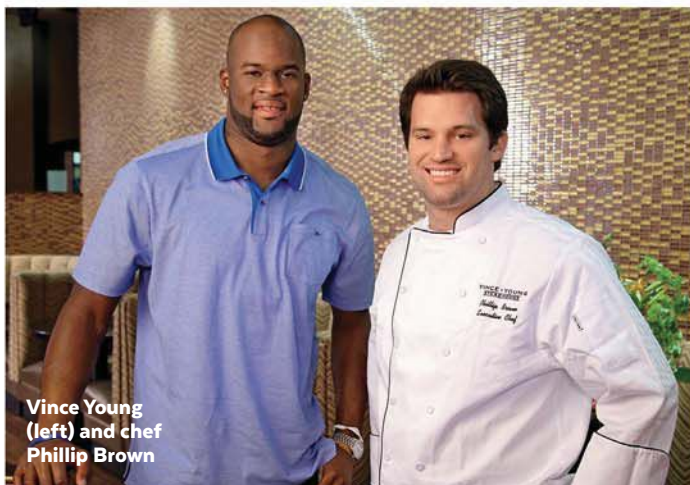
ON A ROLL

THE VINCE YOUNG STEAKHOUSE IN AUSTIN, TEXAS, SERVES UP PRIME CUTS OF STEAK, PLUS TASTY APPETIZERS LIKE THEIR LOBSTER ROLLS.

If the titular name of the Vince Young Steakhouse in Austin rings a familiar bell, you likely know your football. Vince is the former University of Texas quarterback who led the school to a National Championship and went on to play in the NFL with the Tennessee Titans and other teams.

Vince doesn't run the popular restaurant, but the true owners, chef Phillip Brown and his wife, Laura, named it after him because of their long friendship. As you can probably deduce, the restaurant specializes in steak and all the proper trimmings. But the Vince Young Steakhouse is also carving out a name for itself with its ancillary menu of items like seafood, desserts and appetizers. Here's one of their starters, lobster rolls made with a tarragon aioli sauce, which will be perfect for your next summer get-together.

BOB PAXMAN



Vince Young
(left) and chef
Phillip Brown

Lobster Rolls

- 1 pound lobster meat
- 1 pound unsalted butter
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 egg yolks
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Canola oil
- 2 tbsp. tarragon
- 1 head Boston lettuce
- 16 mini hot dog-style buns, lightly toasted

POACH lobster meat in the unsalted, melted butter for 4 minutes. **REMOVE** the mixture from heat and immediately strain the lobster. **PLACE** in refrigerator to chill while making aioli.

For tarragon aioli sauce:

PLACE garlic, egg yolks and lemon juice in a bowl. Begin to **WHISK** slowly, **ADD** canola oil until you have reached the consistency of mayonnaise. Once the mixture is thick, **STIR** in tarragon. In a separate bowl, **COMBINE** chilled lobster meat and aioli and fold into one another. Place a small amount of lettuce in each bun and add a good amount of the lobster mixture to fill. Plate and serve.



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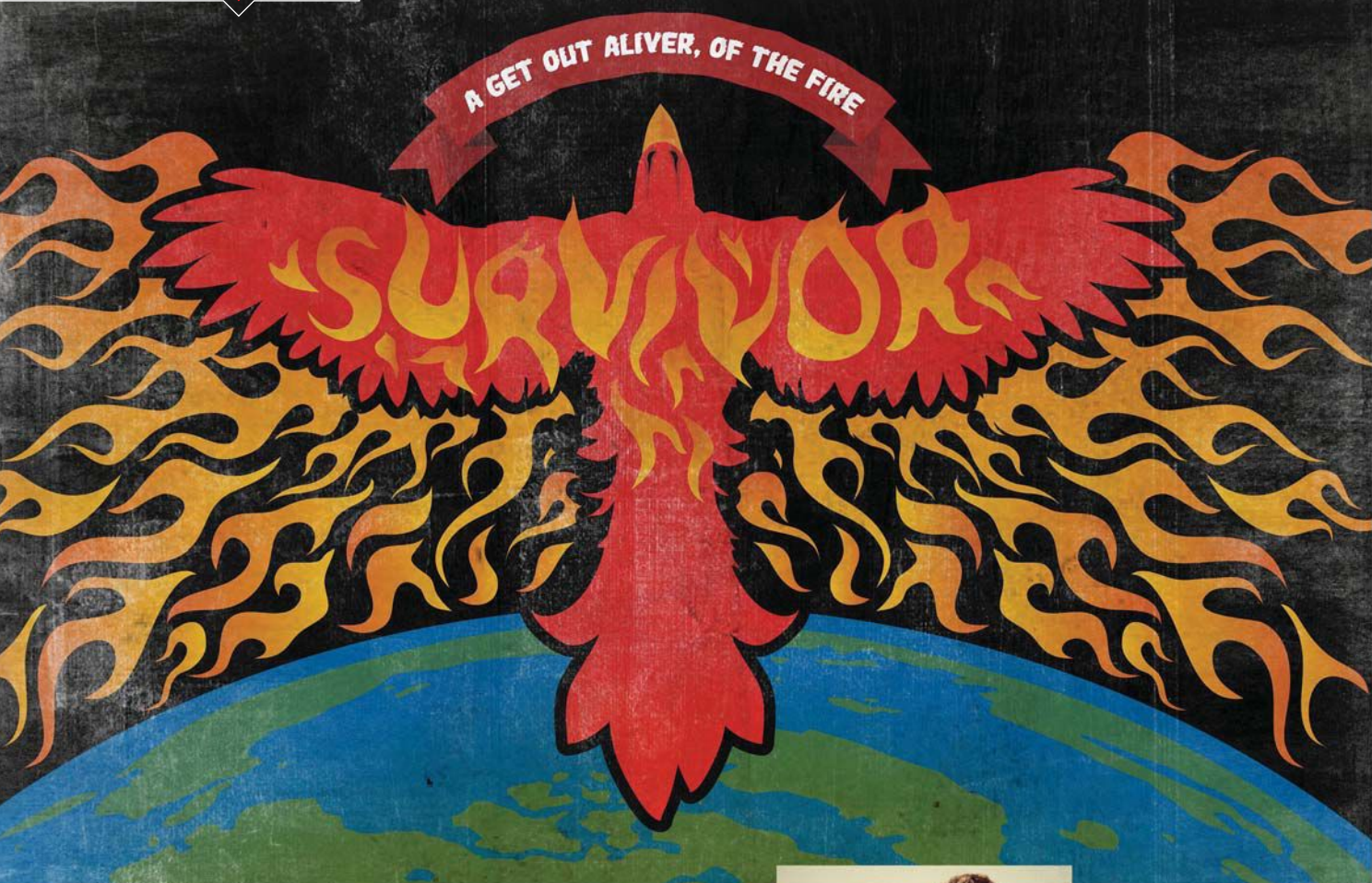
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Single

Dierks Bentley

"Riser"

CAPITOL RECORDS NASHVILLE

A-

Finally, one year and four months after the release of Dierks Bentley's album *Riser*, the collection's centerpiece title track is now an official single. Penned by Travis Meadows and Steve Moakler, it's not some happy-go-lucky tale about how everything's gonna be OK and we'll all ride off into the sunset together. No, it comes by its optimism the hard, real way: by knowing and acknowledging that you're gonna get knocked down from time to time, but that it's what you do as a result

that makes you truly resilient. It's a message that Dierks seems to embody, never having been the guy winning all the awards for his music but finding a way to persist anyway. *This world is cold and getting colder / And I know how to lock and bolt the door*, he tells some unnamed lover in his rough-edged baritone as the kick drum thumps away and U2-esque electric guitar textures ping all around him. He goes on to detail his will to keep fighting, rhyming the title with several other similar-sounding words in the chorus. They don't all work (*riser*, *fighter* and *survivor* are differ-



ent enough to sound a little awkward in combination), but that doesn't diminish the message, and the production sounds great no

matter where you're listening to it. And, seriously, if you aren't certain you can take on hell and come out on the other side after hearing this one, you may need to give it another spin (or two) to let the message sink in.

LONG STORY SHORT:

Dierks' latest may not play at parties, but it's geared to inspire more victories than it is hangovers.

JON FREEMAN

Single

Kristian Bush

"Light Me Up"

STREAMSOUND RECORDS

B+

How do thee light me up? Let me count the "likes." With this second single from his fine album *Southern Gravity*, Kristian plays off (probably without intention) the romantic sonnet by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, expressing his attraction through a series of similes. Beginning with the opening line, *Like a soft blue glow on a radio dial to Like an old Hollywood spotlight*, Kristian uses a myriad of comparisons to describe his lady love's temperature-raising capabilities, which seem plentiful indeed. It all could have sounded terribly repetitive, but Kristian and co-writer Jesse Rice have crafted a stirring melody that builds to a memorable chorus. Not as catchy as the previous single, "Trailer Hitch," but radio-worthy nonetheless.

BOB PAXMAN



Albums

Ashley Monroe

The Blade

COLUMBIA NASHVILLE

A-

Amid all of the aging rock stars and drum-loop-laden, rap-inspired tracks muddying Nashville's country music



landscape, Ashley Monroe cuts through the mire with her newest, unapologetically country album, *The*

Blade. Teeming with fiddle, steel and piano and dripping with whine, wail and twang, *The Blade* takes listeners on a historical tour of the sounds of country music, starting at Barbara Mandrell and finishing with Kitty Wells. Heck, there's even a little Merle Haggard in "Mayflowers."

After the release of her last project, *Like a Rose*, this album further serves to position Ashley Monroe as one of the premier and rare female neo-traditionalists in our format. Yay us!

TAMMY RAGUSA

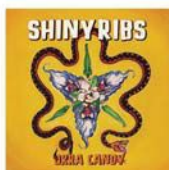
Shinyribs

Okra Candy

SELF RELEASE

A

If you're looking for music that makes you happy, pick up a copy of Shinyribs' new album, *Okra Candy*.



After hearing it, you'll be whistling "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah" out of your wazoo. The brainchild of former Gourds co-frontman Kevin Russell, Shinyribs is a menagerie of brass-infused soul and funkified country that combines the best of Austin and New Orleans. The 10-song offering, which jams with mandolin, sax, trumpet and keys, is layered with Kevin's freethinking lyricism and the band's genre-splitting virtuosity, highlighted on the "The Sacred & the Profane," "Red Quasar," "Walt Disney" and "Donut Taco Palace," which is the perfect microcosm of Shinyribs' sweet and savory sound.

JIM CASEY

Jason Isbell

Something More Than Free

LIGHTNING ROD RECORDS

A

Jason Isbell has a reporter's eye for detail and a poet's gift for a beautifully crafted turn of phrase. On the follow-up to his universally acclaimed album *Southeastern*, the Alabama-born singer/songwriter offers haunting, empathetic stories about people: a teenage mother in the delicate "Children of Children," an exhausted but undefeated blue-collar worker in the moody "Something More Than Free" and a troubled old flame in "The Life You Chose." Jason's throaty rasp, not unlike Tyler Farr's, is the ideal vehicle for those stories, whether he's backed by his trusty band on "If It Takes a Lifetime" or virtually unplugged on "Flagship." It may not be all pretty, but *Something More Than Free* is as real as it gets. J.F.



5 THINGS THAT DALLAS SMITH LOVES ABOUT TOURING

.....

1 Getting to see how the music has connected with everybody. There's nothing better than that. The best thrill as an artist is seeing how songs have become a part of their lives.

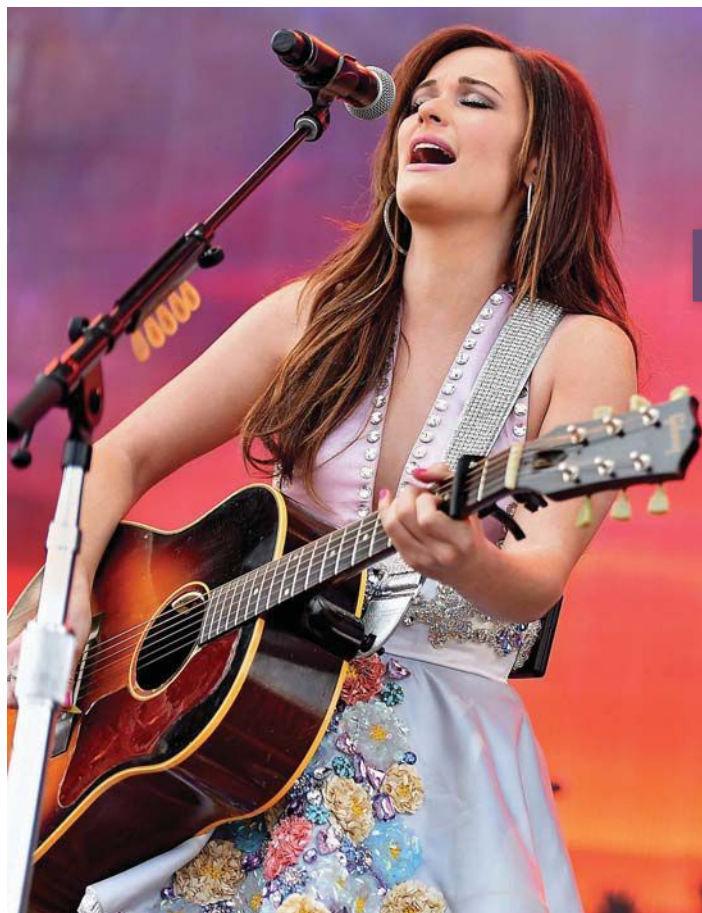
2 Making new friends on tour, whether it's at radio stations or industry people or acts you're playing with.

3 I'm a pretty big foodie, so I like checking out new stuff and appreciate what every city has to offer.

4 I like being busy. Generally when we are touring, my days are pretty busy, so that's a great thing.

5 When I'm at home, I don't watch a lot of TV. I always hear from all my friends how good all these series are like *Breaking Bad*, *Sons of Anarchy* and *Game of Thrones*, so I'm able to invest some time into watching some stuff on TV.





Kacey Musgraves

Country & Western Rhinstone Revue

AUG. 27

Atlanta

The Buckhead Theatre

SEPT. 11

Los Angeles

The Wiltern

SEPT. 18

St. Louis

The Pageant

SEPT. 23

Nashville

Ryman Auditorium

SEPT. 24

Nashville

Ryman Auditorium

OCT. 1

Detroit

Royal Oak Music Theatre

OCT. 3

Philadelphia

The Trocadero Theatre

OCT. 9

New Orleans

The Howlin' Wolf

OCT. 11

Tulsa, Okla.

Cain's Ballroom

OCT. 15

Charlottesville, Va.

Paramount Theater

OCT. 16

Washington, D.C.

Lincoln Theatre

OCT. 23

New Haven, Conn.

College Street Music Hall

OCT. 24

New York

Apollo Theater

NOV. 9

Gateshead, England

Sage Gateshead

NOV. 10

Birmingham, England

The Institute

NOV. 12

Dublin, Ireland

Dublin Academy

NOV. 15

Glasgow, Scotland

Glasgow ABC

NOV. 16

Manchester, England

Albert Hall

NOV. 18

London, England

Royal Albert Hall

NOV. 20

Hamburg, Germany

Knust

NOV. 22

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Melkweg

LIFE ... ACCORDING TO DIERKS BENTLEY

Listen closely and you might find that your favorite country artist isn't just a singer of great songs. Your chosen country star might be a spiritual guru who is teaching life's lessons through his or her lyrics.

"WHAT WAS I THINKIN'"

LIFE LESSON: Yeah, sure, follow your heart . . . blah, blah, blah. It sounds nice in theory, but if there's a 12-gauge and an angry daddy involved, you might want to listen to some rational logic. And really? Never, never run from the po-po.

"MY LAST NAME"

LIFE LESSON: When you come into this world kicking and screaming, you don't have a whole lot except the skin on your bones and the name you were given by your folks. When you leave this world, that's about all you'll take with you, too. You should probably take good care of both.

"FREE AND EASY (DOWN THE ROAD I GO)"

LIFE LESSON: Life is short and, as the song says, "Can't take it with you when you go," so you and your sack of clothes go on now, go for the gusto.

"AM I THE ONLY ONE"

LIFE LESSON: Two's a party and three's a bash, but one? Well, one is just . . . all alone. Life is short. Go to the party.

"HOME"

LIFE LESSON: It may not be perfect and we may not always agree on every little thing, but it is our country. And we stand stronger when we stand together. 'Merica!

"I HOLD ON"

LIFE LESSON: You can't put a price on everything. In fact, the things that mean the most to you are pretty much priceless. Hold on to them.

"DRUNK ON A PLANE"

LIFE LESSON: What goes up must come down, including planes, moods and two-week benders, but while you're up, you might as well enjoy it. And when you come down, you might find you have a few new friends.

TAMMY RAGUSA



photo by Nino Munoz/The Greenroom PR

NASH **NINE**XT

NEW ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

**ASHLEY
MONROE**
cuts like
a knife
with her
new album,
The Blade

SHARPENING HER EDGE

STORY BY JIM CASEY

n a dreary afternoon in early July, Ashley Monroe is back in Nashville from an overnight trip to St. Louis, where she watched her baseball-playing husband, John Danks, and his White Sox defeat the Cardinals in extra innings. She only got three hours of sleep last night, but like the message of her new album's lead single, "On to Something Good," she's optimistic as she gears up for her Grand Ole Opry performance later this evening. A little sleep deprivation and a lot of rain won't get the 28-year-old down. With a new album dropping on July 24, this songbird has a lot to sing about.

The Blade, Ashley's follow-up to 2013's critically acclaimed *Like a Rose*, is as sharp as the title suggests. The 13-track offering, featuring 12 songs co-written by Ashley, is emotive country music—full of fiddle, steel and keys and busting at the seams with lyrics and a voice that will make you feel. A laugh. A tear. A thought. Something. Anything.

"If I hear a song and don't feel anything, that's not a good sign," says Ashley. "That's why I wanted every song on this album to have meaning and feeling. *The Blade* is where I am right now in my life. It's very autobiographical. I've grown in a lot of ways since *Like a Rose*. *The Blade* is just the core of who I am. I think it's like chapter two of my life. I've lived. I've gotten married. I've experienced a lot of types of growing up and maturing—even my style, I'm more honed in on. I have more of a voice, as a human being and an artist, and that shines through on the new album."

The Blade definitely has a luster to it. The sanguine up-tempo "On to Something Good" kicks off the album in foretelling fashion—not thematically, but literally. The 12 songs that follow are indeed something good, but they are a far cry from the cheerful calling of the album's first cut. Instead, Ashley buries, bombshells and blades her audience, cutting straight to the heart of real-life matters with the forlorn "Buried Your Love Alive," the implosive "Bombshell" and the piercing title track. It's definitely a country music gut check. This album, as was *Like a Rose*, is no fairy tale.





photo by Joseph Llanes/WMG Nashville



“I LOVE LISTENING TO MUSIC THAT I CAN RELATE TO. IT’S MAGICAL WHEN IT DOES THAT. I HOPE *THE BLADE* DOES THAT FOR OTHERS.”

“I wrote one happy song [‘On to Something Good’] first and got it out of the way and then took people down a deep, dark dungeon,” says Ashley with a laugh that’s one part sinister and two parts endearing. “It’s hard for me to write up-tempos. I love the waltzes. I love a song like ‘Bombshell.’ That’s one of my favorites on the record, because it can be interpreted so many different ways. The song is about having to say something that’s hard to say. It’s part of growing up. It can be as simple as, ‘I don’t love you anymore. I’m pregnant. I have cancer. I’m gay.’ It’s like all these things that there’s no easy way to say it. And we’ve all had them. It can destroy someone’s life but you have to tell it. It’s hard to explain, but singing those songs makes me feel better. At the Opry tonight, I’m singing ‘If the Devil Don’t Want Me,’ ‘Bombshell’ and ‘The Blade.’ I need to sing those

kinds of songs. I haven’t sung those songs in a few weeks, and I was thinking my heart feels heavy, so I need to sing those songs to get the raw emotion out. I feel better after I sing.”

Songbirds don’t always sing happy songs. Have you ever heard the sad, reflective songs of the robin? For every nightingale that puts a skip in your step, there is a robin like Ashley whose contemplative tune is best served seated in thought. That poignant twang is not just for show, it was earned the hard way.

As a young girl growing up in Knoxville, Tenn., Ashley studied piano, sang in church and even won a talent competition at the mountain resort town of Pigeon Forge, Tenn., where her parents performed five nights a week. Music had always been a force in her life, but when she lost her father

b&w photo by Joseph Lanes/WMC Nashville; perf by Ethan Miller/Getty Images; Ashley & cat by Peter Kramer/NBC



Ashley is all smiles in her "On to Something Good" video; (below) performing during 2015's ACM Awards week.



to cancer as a 13-year-old, it became her salvation.

"Once my dad passed away, I knew my mom and I had to get out of the town we were in," Ashley says. "We were just grieving in an unhealthy way. Music became my lifeline. I said to myself, 'I'm going to Nashville and I'm going to write and sing and make this work.'"

Make it work she did. After 13 years in Music City, Ashley has carved out a place for herself as one of Nashville's true talents, not to mention team players (see sidebar). On the Grand Ole Opry stage later tonight, Ashley will sing those three heart-wrenching songs alone onstage, but in the writing room for *The Blade*, she had a host of songwriting friends backing her up, including her co-producer Vince Gill ("Weight of the Load"), Miranda Lambert

DOUBLE-EDGED

In addition to teaming with Miranda Lambert and Angaleena Presley to form the Pistol Annies in 2011, Ashley has lent her voice to other artists' songs both inside and outside the country music genre, including:

- **2008:** The Raconteurs, "Old Enough"
- **2012:** Train, "Bruises"
- **2014:** Blake Shelton, "Lonely Tonight"



Ashley duets with Train's Pat Monahan on the Today show.



"I love collaborating with people who love music," says Ashley. "I love all kinds of music and listen to all of it, and it's amazing to get to share the love of music with different people. All those people love music. It's in their core. And that's something we all have in common. So I love collaborating with people who love music as much as I do, regardless of the genre."

("I'm Good at Leavin'"), Chris Stapleton ("Winning Streak" and "If the Devil Don't Want Me") and Luke Laird ("On to Something Good"), among others.

Whether or not the end result spells country radio success for Ashley has yet to be determined. Despite country radio's continued lip service regarding playing more female artists, "On to Something Good" was released in March and has yet to crack *Billboard*'s Top 50. And despite the universal critical acclaim that *Like a Rose* garnered, it only had one song that charted, "Weed Instead of Roses," at No. 39.

"I obviously wish women got more radio time, but I wish guys like Chris Stapleton were getting played, too," says Ashley. "I don't want radio to be just women. I want it to be good. It's hard for me to listen to country radio. It almost hurts my feelings. I personally don't understand it. Some of it I do like. But for the most part, I don't understand it. But at the same time, it's not going to stop me. I'm going to keep on. I'll figure out how to get hurt and keep making music. It's not going to stop me by any means. Obviously, country radio is something I would love, but what can you do. Of course I want more people to hear my music. But I am happy with my career. I sit here in my house and think about all the things I wanted to do when I moved here, and I'm doing it. I have to remind myself that so many of my dreams have come true. I'm on the path I'm supposed to be on."

And if the path that led to *The Blade* is still too sharp for country radio, don't expect Ashley to dull it down next time. **N**



DUKES OF HAZARD

AFTER A SERIES OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SETBACKS, HALFWAY TO HAZARD'S CAREER IS COMING FULL CIRCLE.

BY TAMMY RAGUSA

EIGHT YEARS AGO, Halfway to Hazard's David Tolliver and Chad Warrix were poised to become country music's newest princes. What happened in the time since then is part cautionary tale, part redemption story.

"We had the big buzz around town and we had a few labels fighting over us. We were out playing around town and everybody was coming out to our shows," David recalls, seated at a quiet booth in the popular Nashville hang Tin Roof (where he actually has a table on reserve at all times). "We had Tim McGraw producing. We had a record deal and we were going out on

tour with Tim and Faith. How do you not get a big head over that stuff?"

His duo partner, Chad, concurs with that assessment of their promising start. "We kinda were on the launching pad for some pretty big things, we felt, and we were right in the middle of it, but during that process you learn that it's not as glamorous and not as easy as it may seem just to hang on," he says. "And we were kind of just hanging on to the rocket."

Halfway to Hazard enjoyed the exposure of being one of the opening acts for Tim and Faith's Soul2Soul 2007 tour, coming right after the couple's

blockbuster Soul2Soul II tour in 2006. The duo's self-titled debut landed in the Top 20 of the *Billboard* country albums chart upon its release. Things were going well, but behind the scenes was another story.

"Some people handle it better than others, and we just got to a point where it was starting to really affect personal lives," Chad says, looking at David. "It got to a breaking point and something had to give and, unfortunately, Halfway to Hazard as an entity was the thing that gave way."

Chad's tone is more sad than accusatory, but mostly compassionate. The



connection between him and David is beyond mere business partners; it's familial—brotherly, even. It was understandably tough for him to watch David spiral into unhealthy behavior when things weren't working out.

For his part, David doesn't try to gloss over past transgressions.

"Stuff didn't time out like we hoped it would, the album didn't come out until after the tour. We had no idea why. And stuff just started to unravel," he says. This was the beginning of the end for *Halfway to Hazard*. "I was in a marriage that I probably shouldn't have been in. I have two beautiful

children from it and I love my children more than life itself, and my wife at the time, she's a really, really good person," he continues. "She put up with a lot of sh*t from me, definitely. I just liked the party life, I liked to go out and have a good time, I liked to talk to the girls after the show. I wanted to do what I wanted to do and I did it."

Unfortunately, a lot of what David was dealing with behind the scenes was unknown to Chad. "At the time, I was so full steam ahead, loving the moment and embracing it, but my head was in the sand as far as the negativity and the things that may have

been going on that were really burning some bridges for us," he explains. "I'm not saying I was perfect, but David was the lion's share of it. He had some things going on personally and it came across wrong to some of these people. They didn't like his attitude and it did hurt us in the long run."

David doesn't disagree. "It did. I didn't have the life I wanted at home, I didn't have that relationship with my wife and I felt bad about being away from my kids," he says. "We were gone 200 days out of the year. And I drank and did just about everything I could to self-medicate. I was trying to numb the pain and I was having a good time doing it. I just figured, [I'll] take a break from the music for a while, that'll help my marriage. But music wasn't the problem. It was totally me."

These are tough memories to dredge up, but David and Chad interact with kindness and honesty toward each other. They have come to terms with all that happened and the day David decided to call it quits. "He told me it was done and it was like, wow, just like that, pulling the plug on something," Chad recalls. "Honestly, I had been through this once before. I had a record deal not too long before this and the plug got pulled on that one, too. And I found myself wondering, how do I keep finding myself in the middle of these things where I feel like I'm drowning with no one throwing me a life preserver? I wasn't angry at David; I was angry at the situation. It was sad. It's like a death."

David left music entirely and got a job selling tires at Sears, while Chad was able to remain in the music business by picking up gigs as a guitarist with pals Randy Houser and Keith Anderson. He notes that he loved what he was doing, but it came with a price. "Another thing I had to deal with was the people," Chad says. "I was still seeing those radio people and other artists and musicians who were asking, 'What happened? Why are you doing *this*?'"

Even in his job outside the music industry walls, David was deal-



(Left) Performing for their enthusiastic fans by night or (below left) leading their friends in a muddy ATV ride through the hills of Kentucky by day, David Tolliver and Chad Warrix have found that almost everything is better when they do it together. (Below) David (left) and Chad flank Tim McGraw, who gave them a leg up in the biz.



ing with the same thing. “The big one for me was when Jason Aldean came through. We had been on tour with him the summer before,” he recalls. “He walked in and said, ‘Man, what are you doing?’ And I said, ‘Well, I got a real job. I just want to be a regular guy.’ And he said, ‘You don’t need to be doing this.’ And I said, ‘It’s what I’ve got to do right now.’”

David’s fire for music returned when Tim McGraw called and asked him to go to lunch. David played his superstar friend some new songs he had written and Tim offered him a deal with his StyleSonic publishing company. “I was still with my wife at the time and I called her and was like, ‘What do you want me to do? All signs are pointing to me trying to do music again.’ And she said, ‘Whatever you want to do. I don’t care,’” David remembers. “So, I signed a publishing deal with Tim and got back into the scene.” He smiles, adding, “But I still held on to my job at Sears, although I

wasn’t quite the salesman I was when I first started there.”

Halfway to Hazard reunited quietly, following one of Chad and David’s Crockettville charity rides near where they grew up in Kentucky. “At one show we were just like, ‘We should try this again,’” David says.

And that was that: Halfway to Hazard was back. No grand announcements, no fanfare, just a “Let’s do it.” It took a while for David to regain Chad’s trust and for him to even trust himself, but he speculates that his divorce granted him some needed perspective and maturity. “As bad as it is to say, I think I’m a better person now that I’m not married because now I don’t really want to go out and do that other stupid stuff,” he says. “We’re on the road and we go to bed fairly early. I want to do good work and I want to give the best show we can and be as professional as we can.”

The duo is moving ahead with new music, bolstered by the sup-

port of high-profile friends like Luke Bryan, Chris Young and others who started their journey to fame around the same time. “We just want them to make a little room for us,” David jokes, good-naturedly.

“There are still things we haven’t done that we didn’t accomplish the first time around,” Chad adds. “Those goals keep us motivated. And we’re both competitive. We just want to win and show this industry that we can do it.”

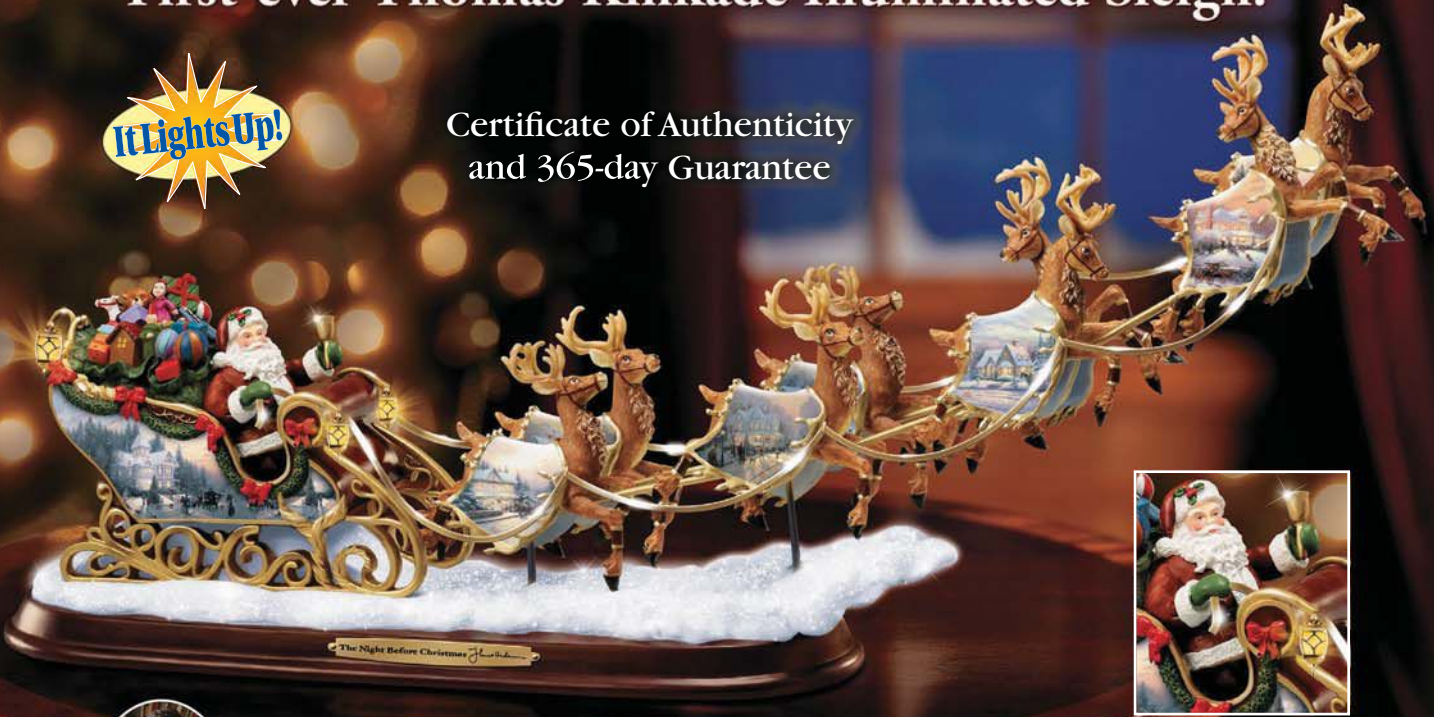
As we say our goodbyes, David offers a simple plea to fans who may remember them as well as those who aren’t yet familiar. “We just want everybody to pay attention and we want folks to reach out to us,” he says. “We want you to give Halfway to Hazard a try because you won’t be disappointed. That’s not cocky, that’s confident. We’re excited. It feels like home. It feels like where we should be, mentally and musically, and it feels like this is the time to do it.” **NCW**

A vision of holiday enchantment

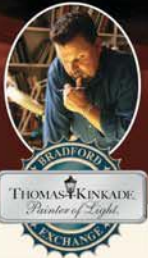
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Living Right

BILLY CURRINGTON LOVES TO LAY LOW WHEN HE'S NOT LAYING DOWN TUNES—AND THAT'S ALL RIGHT BY HIM.

STORY BY BOB PAXMAN

IN THE REALM OF KINDRED SPIRITS, BILLY CURRINGTON might have more in common with the perennial boy of summer Jimmy Buffett than your typical country role models. He is drawn to the water like an aqua magnet and can educate you on the finer points of buying shrimp. (You'll be surprised at what you learn.) And Billy definitely takes an unconventional, laid-back approach as to how he spends his downtime, escaping so far away from the business of music as to be virtually unreachable by land or sea.

Not that he's some sort of slacker, though (and neither is the estimable Buffett, who has built a marketing and merchandising empire that's a sailor's salute to capitalism). When he's on his game, Billy cranks it as hard as anyone, effortless as it may seem to those who have seen him in concert. He would scarcely have survived a dozen years in the industry without dedication and a solid commitment to his art.

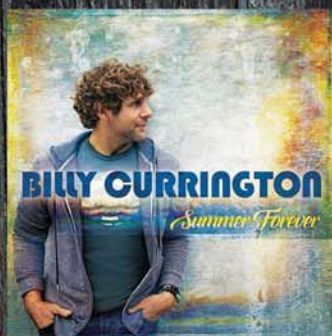
The "dozen years" part of the story catches your attention, because it hardly feels as if he's been around that long. It leaves even Billy himself a little incredulous. "That has gone by fast," admits Billy, who made his debut in 2003 with the openly confessional "Walk a Little Straighter," about his alcoholic stepfather. "I had my first No. 1 ten years ago ['Must Be Doin' Somethin'

Right'], and that doesn't even seem possible that it's been that many years."

Billy has tacked on eight additional No. 1 singles to that first one in 2005. He's also just released his sixth studio album, *Summer Forever*, featuring "Don't It," his latest chart-topper, and the current single, "Drinkin' Town With a Football Problem." You'll also find Billy on Tim McGraw's Shotgun Rider Tour, which keeps him busy throughout the summer and into the fall season. So, he hasn't exactly flown under the radar. But neither is his the first name that comes to mind when the topic turns to male country singers.

That's partly because he prefers to live his offstage life in Savannah, Ga., his birthplace, rather than Nashville. By his own admission, he shies away from the Music City social scene and watering holes. Give him the ocean any day.

"As quick as I can, I get to the ocean," Billy says, smiling. "That was always my first love. I mean, I love making music and I do that as much as possible. But I love the separation from the business. When I'm not touring or in the studio, I look forward to just getting away and going out on a paddle board or a surfboard and just get so far out in the water than no phones can reach me. I just kind of disappear."







BILLY CURRINGTON CONTINUED

During the winter, Billy performs the disappearing act in Hawaii, but not the way you might assume. There's no luxury condo, no fancy resort he retreats to and nothing resembling what one might call a "yacht." Instead, Billy revels in a modern-day surfer's lifestyle, holing up with the same buddies he's known for years. One day at a time? More like one minute.

"I always just stay with friends," Billy says. "I sleep on their couches. In all the years I've been going to Hawaii, I have met enough people where I always have a place to stay for a month or two and not have to buy a place. It's a perfect chance to be with friends and do the things I love."

So, he's not necessarily a 24/7 art-

ist. Where many stars can't seem to tear themselves away from the industry, always taking care of business, Billy has no such dilemma. He admits that, in the early days of his career, his laissez-faire approach required some patience among his record label execs.

"In the beginning, I was definitely being pulled in a lot of different directions and away from the surfing," Billy concedes. "They never said I couldn't go away or couldn't surf, but I think they wanted me to be in Nashville more. I don't know that they understood how passionate I was about that. So, there was a tug of war there for a while. But it slowly dissipated. Now, I set my schedule every year. I know when I'm supposed to be at work and," he pauses

HOT TUNES

Billy Currington reveals his five favorite summer songs as he releases his latest album, *Summer Forever*.

"Summer of '69," Bryan Adams

"That is just a great song."

"Friends in Low Places," Garth Brooks

"I know it's not about summer, but it reminds me of summertime and big parties." [The song was released in the summer of 1990.]

"Margaritaville," Jimmy Buffett

"It puts you in that summer mood. A lot of his songs I could put on here."

"Something Like That," Tim McGraw

"It takes you back to summer and having good times."

"Surfin' U.S.A.," The Beach Boys

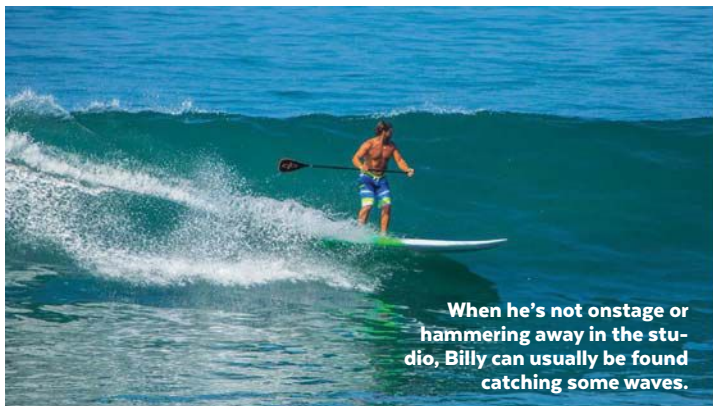
"My mom used to play me The Beach Boys' stuff all the time. I love this one."

for a quick smile, "they know when I'm not going to be at work."

Sticking to his guns came with a trade-off. Some money-making opportunities were missed in years past, simply because Billy was nowhere near Nashville. During touring season, he operates out of Savannah. In the winter, Billy answers the call of the wild and migrates to Hawaii as soon as the temperature dips below 70.

But no regrets. "It's true that if I played music all year long, I'd probably get a little more back and make more money," Billy agrees. "But my life has never been about that. Getting away from music and not living in Nashville keeps me healthy and happy. I enjoy my life."

Right now, though, Billy's in summer performing mode, as he tours with Tim McGraw and promotes the new *Summer Forever* album. The record fairly brims with a summery, feel-good air, perfectly suited to Billy's overall philosophy of life. But in truth, that was never intended as



When he's not onstage or hammering away in the studio, Billy can usually be found catching some waves.



Billy and his grandmother Mimi celebrate at the No. 1 party for "Hey Girl" in 2013.

the album's theme.

"You know, 'Summer Forever' was actually the last song we recorded," Billy recalls with a grin. "That came in at the last minute. I loved the title when I first saw it and I even thought, 'Man, if this works out, it would be a great title for the album.'" Billy doesn't necessarily view the collection as a "beach record." But it's likely to put a smile on your face. "If you are sitting on a beach or cutting your grass or whatever you're doing, this will be a happy album for you," he says.

It would come as little shock, however, to hear him affirm that summer is his favorite season. The smile grows warm and nostalgic as he reflects on the summers of his youth in Rincon, Ga., about 20 miles from Savannah and the historic city's beaches along the Atlantic Ocean. "I have so many great memories of growing up on the ocean as a kid," Billy begins. "Mom had us on the beach all summer long, and I think I was fortunate to grow

up in that environment. We went swimming, surfing and crabbing."

By the latter, he means, of course, the pursuit of the tasty crustacean that dwells in the Atlantic. "We are big-time into blue crabs and stone crabs down in South Georgia," Billy declares, leaning forward in his chair as if he's about to nab one himself. "And we catch our own shrimp, too. I don't eat shrimp unless I catch it."

And for good reason. Some of the shrimp we buy in stores have questionable, to put it mildly, health benefits. So, here's the lesson for the day, from a guy who knows his seafood. "If you see shrimp and it's white, don't buy it," Billy says with authority. "Some of that shrimp that comes from China and other places, they bleach it [to remove black spots, according to several reports]. It's bad. I have seen the difference. The best way is to get it fresh if you can."

When you take in the overall picture, you must concur that life has been good to Billy. He turns 42 later

this year, but sports the look of a much younger man. Full curls still spring from his head and the former fitness instructor maintains a trim physique (must be all that surfing and paddle boarding).

He takes inspiration from his grandmother, evidently a spitfire even into her late 80s. "She teaches me all the time that you just have to keep moving," Billy says softly. "My grandma is in her 80s, but she hasn't stopped. She still goes to the Y and stays active. That's the key—be active."

And, he might add, live life on your own terms. "There were times early on when I thought, you know, am I ever going to realize my dream? I wondered if things would ever happen for me," Billy says. "Now, it all seems to be working out. I have enjoyed every minute of it. I'm always looking forward to the future, but I enjoy the moment, too." And flashing one more smile, he can't help but note, "I wouldn't change anything. Not one thing." **NCW**

Simply Alan

ALAN JACKSON is a self-proclaimed singer of simple songs, and we wouldn't want it any other way on his new album, Angels and Alcohol.

STORY BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

WHEN AN ARTIST IS FORTUNATE ENOUGH to celebrate 25 successful years in the music business, there could be the temptation to throw their audience a curveball and move in a different direction. But that's not Alan Jackson. Consistency has always been his strong suit, and with the July 17 release of his 15th studio album, *Angels and Alcohol*, Alan once again delivers the kind of meat-and-potatoes, traditional country music that has sold nearly 60 million albums and earned him 26 *Billboard* No. 1 hits, 18 Academy of Country Music awards, 16 Country Music Association awards, a pair of Grammys and countless other accolades.

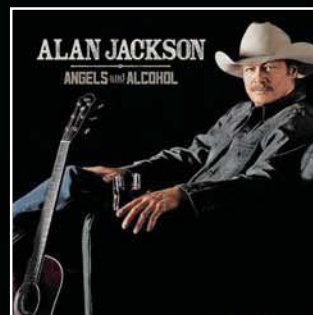
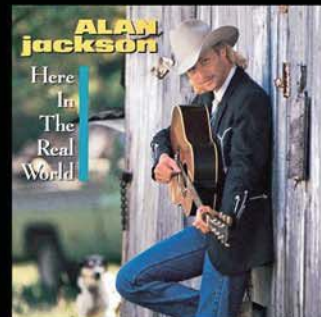


photo by Dorn Jones/CMA





(Left) Alan with the late Roy Acuff at the Grand Ole Opry; (below) with (from left) daughter Dani, wife Denise and daughters Mattie and Ali at the opening of his Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum exhibit; (bottom) Alan receives his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2010, presented by *Nash Nights Live* host Shawn Parr (right).



ALAN JACKSON CONT.

"[During] the whole 25 years, it was about keeping it country, and I've tried to do that," Alan says on a sunny Friday afternoon in late June. "I just wanted to make this album and for people to say, 'That's what he's done. He's kept it country.' You could probably play this next to my first album and there wouldn't be a lot of difference in

song content or production. My voice was a lot higher back then. My voice has gotten deeper with age, but other than that there probably isn't much difference and I'm proud of that."

With a string of chart-topping hits like "Chattahoochee," "Don't Rock the Jukebox," "Gone Country," "Drive," "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" and "Small

Town Southern Man," the Newnan, Ga., native has a lot to be proud of, but he brushes off compliments with an aw-shucks charm and self-effacing attitude that make the man as endearing as the music.

On *Angels and Alcohol*, his first album in three years, Alan once again delivers the kind of engaging, heartfelt songs his fans have come to expect. It's been 25

years since the release of his debut album, *Here in the Real World*. Since then, Alan has released 22 albums, including two Christmas collections, two gospel albums, three greatest-hits packages and an acclaimed bluegrass album. So what has he learned that he put to use in recording his latest venture? "It helps once you've been doing it for so long," he notes. "You learn

which songs fit better together. It's me being in the studio making them all unique, but somehow making them fit together, and that's sometimes the hard thing to do."

Alan premiered the song "Angels and Alcohol" during a special performance last fall at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and the crowd response was so enthusiastic he knew it needed to be the centerpiece of the new album. "I was very surprised that the crowd reacted to it," he says. "I've done it a couple times since then and [it] always gets a good reaction. They were fired up about it that night. I was very excited about that."

He says the song had been in the works for a bit. "I've had that hook laying around for a while," he says. "I don't know where I got 'angels and alcohol.' At first, I thought it sounded like an album title more than anything. I just had it laying there, and finally one day I sat down and tried to write it and it just came out that way. It's about alcohol abuse and how it affects your whole life and relationships and dealing with your own problems. It's just hard to do anything when that has an effect on you."

Alan's new album is a blend of fun up-tempo—like "You Never Know," an energetic treatise of life's little surprises, and "Jim and Jack and Hank," an upbeat look at the end of a relationship—and more

reflective fare, such as the beautiful ballad "When God Paints."

Alan wrote seven of the album's 10 songs by himself, and the album's opener, "You Can Always Come Home," was written for his three daughters. "Ali moved out to California last fall, and that's when I wrote it," he says of his middle daughter leaving home to pursue an entertainment career. "It kind of reminded me of when I moved to Nashville and didn't know anybody and I'd go and call my folks at home. My mama and daddy were supportive even though they were worried about me coming up here. My daddy always said, 'You can always come home. If it doesn't work out, you can always come home.' I've always remembered that, so that's when it reminded me of Ali, and that's where that one came from. She thought it was sweet. When I first played it, it was just me and the guitar, a little rough demo."

This is a big year for Alan in many ways. Not only has he been celebrating his 25th anniversary with a spring tour featuring openers Jon Pardi and Brandy Clark, but his career was also the subject of an exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and he's just released *Angels and Alcohol*. But beyond the career fanfare, he and his wife of 35 years, Denise, are about to move into a new season of life and

Let Me Ride

Most husbands have a project or two around the house they plan on tackling during the summer, and Alan Jackson is no exception. "I always piddle around with something, an old boat or car, that kind of project going on," he tells NCW. "I used to do it all the time, a different car restoration project. I don't do that quite like I used to. I just still piddle around with the same old things like I did when I was a teenager, cars and boats. That's about it."

So what's on his agenda this summer? "I bought an old Range Rover from the '90s, this kind of collectible thing that I like," he says. "It's a four-wheel-drive kind of safari-looking thing."

When it comes to cars, he admits he's always been a fan and collected just about every type of automobile at one time or other. "I love all of them," he says with a grin. "The last I've had was a Dodge. I've had Fords. Haven't had a Chevy in a while, but I got this new GMC Denali that I like. It's got more horsepower than any of them and it's cool looking. And I got a new Jeep, a two-door Jeep that I like."

"I quit buying those sports cars anymore. I mostly drive a truck or something. I used to keep a Corvette until they came up with the new model, which I think looks cool, and I bought one, but it's just too tight. They made it even smaller. I can't hardly even fit in it," the 6-foot-4-inch singer says. "So I got rid of it. I quit buying the sports cars because I don't like them. I drive my old trucks mostly."



(Left) A dating Alan and Denise in his 1955 Thunderbird; (below) the same car today





ALAN JACKSON CONT.

become empty nesters when the youngest of their three daughters, Dani, heads to college this fall.

"Dani just graduated from high school. It's her senior summer, so we kind of let her dictate what she wants to do," the proud father says. "When she wants to go somewhere, we'll do that for her. We've already been to the lake some and we'll go

back there. And we'll go down to Florida some. I've got to play a show out in California. It's just a one-off thing, I think we'll make a little family trip out of that, and then I've got to go to New York to do some TV [appearances], and I think we'll make a little family trip out of that. So we're kind of all over the place, but it will be fun and it will be a good summer."

Their eldest daughter, Mattie,


has moved back to Nashville. "She's trying to get her own little business going here," Alan says. "She wants to open up her own little restaurant/market/wine place that's kind of the popular place in cities now. She's been looking into doing something like that. She is looking at two locations and trying to figure if it would work or not."

After 35 years of marriage and

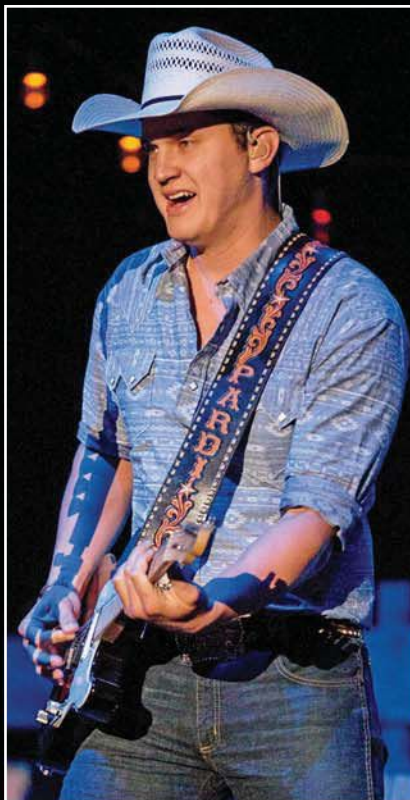
Alan by Dusty Draper/CMA, Jon and Brandy by Daniel DelSaverio/Corbis

“During the whole 25 years, it was about keeping it country.”

Alan Jackson



25 years and going strong, Alan still draws a crowd, including at this year's CMA Music Festival; (right) Jon Pardi and Brandy Clark warmed up audiences for Alan this spring.



raising three daughters, how does Alan feel about the empty nest looming? “Denise is more sentimental about it than I am,” he says. “I just feel like that’s what you raise them for and you prepare them. It’s their time to step out and be young adults. Not that I want to see them go, but that’s what they are supposed to do.”

Alan plans to play select concert dates this summer but will take

some time off to spend with Denise. “I’m not going to do much this fall,” he says. “Our baby is going to college and we’re going to be by ourselves for a change. We’re just going to enjoy doing what we want to do. Our kids have been great, but we are ready to do what we want to do for more than two or three days at a time. We just want to go to the lake house and enjoy the fall and go to

Florida in the winter and fish and just chase the sunshine.”

With a successful 25-year career and loving 35-year marriage, just what is left on Alan Jackson’s bucket list? “Nothing left,” he says gratefully. “I just want to keep on making an album or two every now and then. Hopefully some fans will still like it and I’ll tour a little bit. I don’t know how I can ask for much more.” **NCW**

A photograph of Trisha Yearwood, a blonde woman with long, wavy hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a black top with a lace-like pattern. She is standing behind a wooden podium. The podium has a sign that reads "Treasures from TRISHA" in large, white, serif font. Below the title, in smaller white text, it says "TRISHA YEARWOOD OFFERS UP CHERISHED MEMENTOS AND FUN ARTIFACTS IN HER NEW EXHIBIT AT THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM." To the right of the title, in even smaller white text, it says "BY BOB PAXMAN". At the bottom of the podium, there is a circular logo with the words "COUNTRY" and "MUSIC" in a stylized font.

Treasures from **TRISHA**

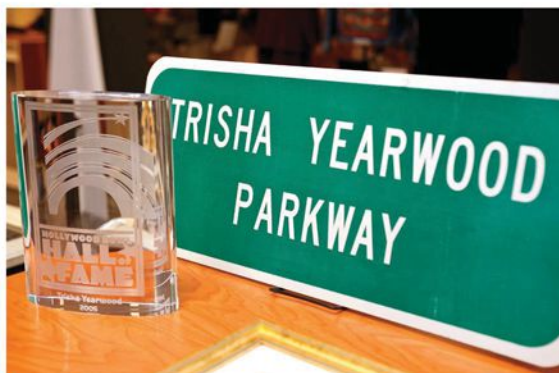
BY
BOB
PAXMAN

TRISHA YEARWOOD OFFERS UP CHERISHED MEMENTOS
AND FUN ARTIFACTS IN HER NEW EXHIBIT AT THE
COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM.





(Above right) Trisha checks out the exhibit with sister Beth (center) and Carolyn Tate from the Hall of Fame and Museum.



THINGS ARE HOPPING at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville this summer. The national archive of country music, in the center of downtown Nashville, has a hot list of new and recently opened exhibits for fans to peruse, including *Dylan, Cash and the Nashville Cats: A New Music City*, *Luke Bryan: Dirt Road Diary* and *Ronnie Milsap: A Legend in My Time*.

Trisha Yearwood became the latest artist to get a special spot in the museum with her exhibit, *Trisha Yearwood: The Song Remembers When*, which opened July 3. The exhibit chronicles Trisha's life and career from her childhood in tiny Monticello, Ga., to early days in Nashville and eventual country stardom.

The museum's writer/editor Michael McCall gave *Nash Country Weekly* a sneak peek through Trisha's exhibit, which contains plenty of professional items but also mixes in some personal mementos that viewers will find fascinating.

One item, a scrapbook Trisha kept during her school days, reveals a little-known tidbit.

"She has pictures of herself performing in high school and talent shows," Michael points out. "People have gotten the impression that Trisha never really performed until she came to Nashville, but these photos clearly show otherwise. And something else people will learn is that her dad paid for a recording session in Georgia when she was still in school. So, she was thinking about her career well before she got to Nashville." The exhibit actually includes the handwritten receipt for the demo recording she did in Georgia.

Music obviously was a shared passion in the Yearwood household, as the exhibit showcases. Prominently displayed are two guitars, one belonging to her parents and one to Trisha. "The Yamaha belonged to Trisha," Michael explains. "That was the first guitar she ever had. We have some photos of her playing guitar,

which are kind of rare. She very seldom plays guitar in her shows now."

Thankfully for the museum, Trisha and her mom, Gwen, collected and saved mementos over the years. "[Mom] saved everything from childhood on," Trisha noted at an industry reception prior to the exhibit's opening. "She was a schoolteacher, so she was very organized." When the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum contacted her about an exhibit, Trisha was ready with the goods.

Among Trisha's other personal treasures are her high school yearbook from 1982, for which Trisha served as editor (perhaps that's why she's so media-friendly), and an autograph she received from Reba McEntire in 1985 at Nashville's Rivergate Mall, well before Trisha launched her singing career. The autograph is made out to "Patricia," which, of course, is Trisha's full first name (full name: Patricia Lynn Yearwood). "Reba herself was just beginning to break through as a major star,"

Trisha's TOP 10

Here are 10 of Trisha Yearwood's major accomplishments from her career, which began in 1991.

1991

Trisha's debut single, "She's in Love With the Boy," hits No. 1.

1992

Academy of Country Music award for Top New Female Vocalist.

1992

American Music Award for Favorite New Country Artist.

1997

Country Music Association award for Female Vocalist of the Year (she repeated in 1998).

1998

Grammy for Best Female Country Vocal Performance, "How Do I Live."

1997-2002

Recurring role in the TV series JAG.

2005

Marries Garth Brooks in Oklahoma.

2008

Releases her first cookbook, *Georgia Cooking in an Oklahoma Kitchen* (she has since authored two more).

2012

Her cooking show *Trisha's Southern Kitchen* premieres on Food Network.

2013

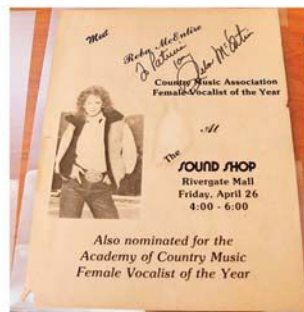
Emmy award, Outstanding Culinary Program, for *Trisha's Southern Kitchen*.



Trisha notes that her mother saved several items over the years, including her stage wear and gowns.



Trisha's prized mementos include a guitar, her awards and an autograph from Reba McEntire (right).



A scrapbook that Trisha maintained contains performance photos from her school days and TNN's *You Can Be a Star*.



TRISHA YEARWOOD CONTINUED

Michael notes. "Trisha was probably a student at Belmont College [now Belmont University] at the time."

Career achievements, shown through plaques and her numerous awards, dot the exhibit. Fans will take notice of a platinum plaque for her 1991 self-titled debut album, citing sales of 1 million copies, a first for a new female country artist. That album

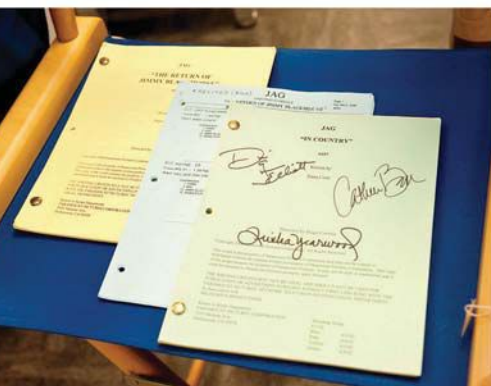
was fueled by Trisha's debut single, "She's in Love With the Boy," which placed her on a highly exclusive list. Trisha became the first female since Marie Osmond in 1973 to hit No. 1 with her first single, and only the third female at the time to accomplish the feat. The exhibit features the copy of that history-making first album that Trisha bought the day it hit stores, a tradition she has continued with all of

her subsequent albums.

No exhibit would be complete without wardrobe items, and visitors will be treated to an eyeful in *Trisha Yearwood: The Song Remembers When*. There's a stunning sequined dress she wore for an Academy of Country Music awards show, along with a gown she sported at the 1997 Grammys, along with a jacket worn in the music video for her single "Walkaway



Fans will explore a variety of memorabilia in the *Trisha Yearwood: The Song Remembers When* exhibit.



Joe." And the beautiful gown from her 2005 wedding to Garth Brooks? Yep, it's there in all its dazzling glory.

During her career, which now spans nearly 25 years, Trisha has developed a musical legacy based on a certain artistic integrity and an instinct for remarkable songs. "When everybody else was doing novelty-type and fun songs," explains the Hall's Michael McCall, "Trisha was

doing very thoughtful material. Even her up-tempo stuff like maybe 'XXX's and OOO's (An American Girl)' still had some substance to them. She really wanted to be seen as an artist."

That served as one reason why the Hall of Fame came calling. "She's also had a significant impact on the industry," says Michael. "There's no doubt that Trisha has been an influence on many of today's singers."

Trisha herself is pleased to share her memories with fans and followers. "It's such a thrill to see my life and career milestones displayed in an exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum," she says. "This special exhibit is truly an honor."

Trisha Yearwood: The Song Remembers When runs through December at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville. **NCW**

Blues Brothers

COUNTRY'S FAVORITE SOUTHERN BOOGIE BAND, **THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS**, RELEASE THEIR NEW ALBUM, *MEET ME IN BLUESLAND*, RECORDED WITH AN R&B LEGEND.



photo by Ash Newell/Weber PR

GATHER THE CURRENT KENTUCKY

Headhunters—guitarist Richard Young, bassist/vocalist Doug Phelps, lead guitarist Greg Martin and drummer Fred Young—into a room, and it's not your typical NPR-style interview. Instead, you get a highly entertaining round-robin circus of storytelling and recollections, enhanced with a Southern novelist's eye for detail. Keeping them on point requires the dexterity of an air traffic controller, but the guys eventually manage to reign in their spontaneous group gab and speak about the subject at hand.

The longhaired quartet of pure Kentucky country boys has finally released the album of songs they recorded back in 2003 with Chuck Berry's piano player Johnnie Johnson, *Meet Me in Bluesland*. The tracks, which also included bass player and former Headhunter Anthony Kenney, were cut roughly two years before Johnnie died in 2005. Originally, the intention was for Johnnie to simply back his Headhunters buddies for their album *Soul*. But new songs and fresh arrangements kept being written, tapes rolled freely and the vibe was loose and free of interference. They completed 11 songs, yet there were never any immediate plans to release an album from the sessions.

Now, 10 years after Johnnie's passing, an album is available, with all 11 cuts intact, including a version of Chuck Berry's "Little Queenie." Richard, brandishing his always-unlit cigar for emphasis, notes that, "This album is getting us a lot of attention that we weren't banking on. Isn't that how it always works? But really, we did the record for the love of the music and nothing else."

The story of how these four guys from the Kentucky backwoods hooked up with an R&B legend is one that Richard has related on many an occasion. And he's happy to retell it. Their first meeting occurred at a 1992 Grammy party in New York, when the boys were shocked to find Johnnie, nominated for his album *Johnnie B.*

Bad, sitting at a table by himself.

"All these young guys were walking right past him," Richard recalls, still a bit incredulous at the very notion, "so we went over to him and started asking him questions about Chuck Berry. We probably scared him half to death," Richard adds, drawing laughs from the others. "But we were raised on Chuck Berry. Johnnie Johnson and Chuck Berry wrote a lot of Chuck's songs and



"This album is getting us a lot of attention that we weren't banking on. Isn't that how it always works?"

RICHARD YOUNG

they were the first real rock 'n' roll team, like Mick Jagger and Keith Richards or Elton John and Bernie Taupin." The Headhunters recruited Johnnie for their 1993 album, *That'll Work*, and formed a tight friendship with the bluesman, who was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001.

Meet Me in Bluesland marks the band's first album release since 2011's *Dixie Lullabies*. Last year, the Headhunters celebrated the 25th anniversary

of the album that set country music on its collective ear, *Pickin' on Nashville*, which featured the amped-up electrified version of the Bill Monroe standard "Walk Softly on This Heart of Mine." The Headhunters' raw amalgam of rock, country and a smattering of boogie and blues caught fire with fans out of the gate, and *Pickin' on Nashville* blazed its way to winning the Country Music Association Album of the Year award in 1990. The Kentucky Headhunters also won back-to-back CMA Vocal Group of the Year honors in 1990 and 1991.

"We blended everything," says Doug. "But it was a double-edged sword." Greg picks up the thread, explaining that their rock sensibilities played effectively to a younger audience but likely turned off more traditional ones. "Some people thought they were listening to a rock station when our songs came on," Greg says with a subtle smile. "We kind of knew that our days of being on top were short-lived. I always say we had some albums that were double platinum and some that were double cardboard."

Certainly, their post-*Pickin'* releases saw mild to weak sales, while their only Top 10 single came in 1990 with their cover of "Oh Lonesome Me." Richard says, "Radio was never a big thing for us. But our fans have stuck with us and we have been able to keep this thing going."

And they will keep the machine churning and burning with this current lineup. Numerous personnel changes have taken place over the years, with original lead singer Ricky Lee Phelps, Doug's brother, departing in 1992 (along with Doug for a brief period) and Anthony Kenney essentially retiring a few years ago due to family health issues.

"We have been this way, four members, for several years now," Ricky notes. "We're not gonna add anybody else. It just messes up the chemistry, man. It all works and we all get along. We know that we have been blessed."

BOB PAXMAN



NEW

EMILY WEST
*branches out with
the sweeping pop
sounds of "Bitter."*

GROOVE

COUNTRY MUSIC DIDN'T QUITE work out the way Emily West had hoped, but what had been one of her biggest liabilities is now one of her greatest strengths.

After Emily's country singles "Rocks in Your Shoes" and "Blue Sky" failed to ignite at radio, the Iowa native departed Nashville for New York. She was soon turning heads on *America's Got Talent* with her more-than-able covers of Sia's smash "Chandelier" and Cyndi Lauper's "True Colors" on her way to the final. A magician edged her out for the grand prize, but one thing was very clear: she could sing anything.

Emily's new single, "Bitter," puts an exclamation point on that notion by placing her in lush pop surroundings that play off the palpable emotion in her powerful vocals. Written by Emily with Jodi Marr and Julian Emery during a trip to London, the song arrived at a time when Emily was basically broke and not sure where her career was going.

"'Bitter' is such an incredibly bold statement. I don't think anybody has had that song title for a long time, and I was really worried about releasing it for the first big single that I wrote, especially after my history," she says. "I'm just like, man, I'm not *that* bitter."

Needless to say, "Bitter" is hardly the Emily West of "Rocks in Your Shoes," which was an upbeat tune about persevering when the going gets tough. With "Bitter," she's doing the opposite and giving herself fully to one of the most unappealing, unbecoming emotions a human can experience in order to move on from a bad relationship.

"It's funny, because 'Rocks in Your Shoes,' it is a great message and I love that song," she says. "But sometimes a woman just needs to be bitter so she can move on and be peaceful."

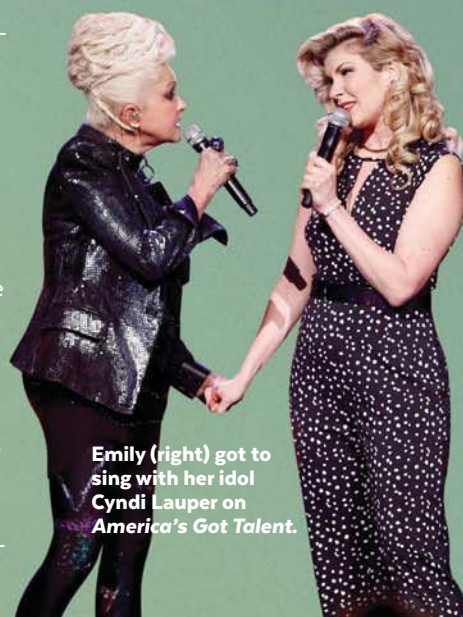
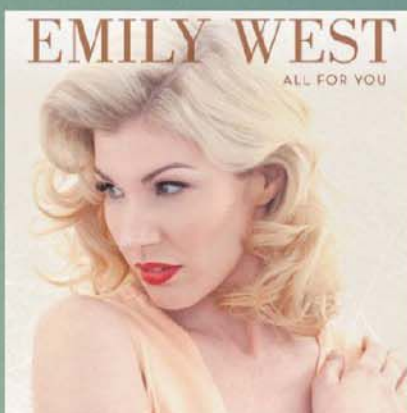
There's also a physicality and use of contrast to "Bitter" that saves it from being an exercise in self-pity and transforms it into something more empowering. Lyrically, it's practically seething at the entire world, but the airy, cloudlike arrangement is built on a beat that beckons movement. It's an approach favored

by one of Emily's favorite songwriters.

"Tom Waits said it best. He said, 'I love singing beautiful melodies telling me horrible things.' I've always loved that," she says.

But instead of Tom Waits-style piano cabaret or junkyard blues, "Bitter" has more in common with the Celtic music-tinged pop of Florence + the Machine and particularly Kate Bush, whom Emily cites as an inspiration while she was writing and trying to find her musical identity.

"We were trying to figure out who I'm gonna be as an artist, because it's been a big headache for a lot of companies to figure out who I am," she admits. "I can do anything, really, but it's just like, who do I want to be? What do I want to say? But at that moment, I was trying to be a little bit



Emily (right) got to sing with her idol Cyndi Lauper on *America's Got Talent*.

of Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush."

"Bitter" is the lead single from Emily's forthcoming album, *All for You*, which includes her versions of "Chandelier," "Nights in White Satin" and "True Colors," with a guest appearance by Cyndi Lauper, in addition to a wide-ranging series of original tunes. Like "Bitter," these new tunes allow Emily to show off a tonal range in her voice that most who remember her country records haven't heard.

"As a songwriter, I'm always a big fan of when I go to a show and I'm feeling the person and the story they're telling instead of just going, 'Wow, she has a great voice,'" she explains. "I'm not a fan of a great voice, I'm a fan of, let's tell the story. With a lot of the ups and downs I've been through, I feel like I've become more of a storyteller. Not to say that I'm not a great singer anymore, but I'm paying more attention to the actual story of it."

That, in theory, should make Emily an ideal country singer, given the genre's penchant for narratives set to melody.

"I have not given up on country music," she says. "One day I will make a beautiful, timeless country record. I love country music and I cut my teeth on it. I wouldn't be here if I didn't ever hear Patsy Cline's voice. But even Patsy struggled with where she fit, if you think about it. She was in pop music, but she just had a timeless voice."

Blessed with her own prodigious vocal gifts, Emily now realizes it's less important to confine herself to one particular genre box than it is to come with songs that connect.

"With country music, I tried so hard to just belt all the time and tried to get people to like me," she admits. "That was hard on my voice and hard on my spirit, because in the end, people wanted to hear a story. Whatever genre—country, or pop, or whatever—if you can tell the story and it's a good one, then people are gonna listen."

If the last few years of her life are any indication, Emily should have one heck of a story. And now she knows she can tell it however she wants.

JON FREEMAN



GIRLS GONE CRUSHING

It is not uncommon for frequent co-writers to mesh together so well that they become an entity. Rhett Akins, Dallas Davidson and Ben Hayslip did it with the Peach Pickers. The Warren Brothers (Brett and Brad) and the Beavers brothers (Brett and Jim) did as well with their mock band The Warren Beavers. Now you can add the Love Junkies, comprised of Hillary Lindsey, Liz Rose and Lori McKenna, to the list.

The Love Junkies set aside writ-

"GIRL CRUSH"

LITTLE BIG TOWN

WRITERS: Hillary Lindsey, Lori McKenna, Liz Rose

ing blocks every few months to enjoy each other's company, but also to see what kind of hit songs they can craft together. "We go to my house, and we just stay there for three or four days," explains Liz. "We cook and drink and just hang out."

One of their latest retreats started off just as they always do, and on day two, the Junkies were hit with a song that was never discussed beforehand, but one that had a significant impact on all of their careers. Liz and Lori were getting their notes sorted while waiting for Hillary to join them, when Lori mentioned a song idea called "Girl Crush." "I thought it was a very cool concept," Liz recalls.

After Lori told Hillary about the idea, Hillary grabbed her guitar, sat



LBT by Douglas Gorenstein/NBC; Lori courtesy ASCAP; Liz courtesy SESAC

on the couch and asked if she meant something along the lines of *I've got a girl crush, hate to admit it, but I got a heart rush, ain't slowin' down*. "We went, 'Yeah . . . something like that!'" says Liz, laughing. "We were blown away. We jumped right into it. It was so fun to kind of take the idea apart and twist it up. It wasn't what you would typically think: a girl having a crush on the guy, so she likes the girl that the guy's got. She wants to be the girl that he's in love with."

Once they finished "Girl Crush" that morning, Little Big Town's Karen Fairchild and Kimberly Schlapman came by to collaborate with the songwriters, in hopes that they would walk away with a song or two for their upcoming album. Like they always do, Karen and Kimberly asked what songs they had been working on, so the Love Junkies pulled out a handful of tunes. "We played them everything they hadn't heard and the stuff we had written the day



Liz Rose



Lori McKenna



Hillary Lindsey

FALL GALS

The same day that "Girl Crush" was born, Liz, Lori and Hillary also wrote "Tumble and Fall" with Karen and Kimberly, which also became one of the tracks on Little Big Town's *Pain Killer*.

before," says Liz. "Then we kind of went, 'OK . . . we have this last song, but it's kind of out there, but it's fun and we love it so much.' Karen said, 'Well, I want to hear it!' We played it for them, and they just freaked out. They were like, 'We absolutely want this song.' It was so great."

"Girl Crush" made the final cut for LBT's *Pain Killer* album and was released as the second single. The song became a No. 1 hit on *Billboard's* Hot Country and Digital Songs charts, and even raised a few eyebrows based on the song's title, but at the end of the day, it was a success for all involved.

"The camaraderie between me, Hillary and Lori is really special," notes Liz. "And we love Karen, Kimberly, Phillip and Jimi so much. We have had such a great friendship with them, and it's so amazing that they've taken that song and done what they've done with it."

"Everything came together so naturally," continues Liz. "The song came together easy and natural. Playing it for them was easy and natural. Everybody's response to it has just been incredible. I'm shocked, but I'm not."

ALANNA CONAWAY

The week of July 11, 2015

TOP 25 BILLBOARD ALBUMS

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	—	PAGEANT MATERIAL KACEY MUSGRAVES
2	3	MONTEVALLO SAM HUNT
3	1	JEKYLL + HYDE ZAC BROWN BAND
4	—	BRONCO CANAAN SMITH
5	2	NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL COUNTRY, VOLUME 8 • VARIOUS ARTISTS
6	5	PAIN KILLER LITTLE BIG TOWN
7	4	DJANGO AND JIMMIE WILLIE NELSON & MERLE HAGGARD
8	6	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH
9	7	JUST AS I AM BRANTLEY GILBERT
10	9	OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT JASON ALDEAN
11	10	ANYTHING GOES FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
12	15	CRASH MY PARTY LUKE BRYAN
13	13	SPRING BREAK . . . CHECKIN' OUT LUKE BRYAN
14	8	35 BIGGEST HITS TIM MCGRAW
15	11	SOUTHERNALITY A THOUSAND HORSES
16	18	GREATEST HITS: DECADE #1 CARRIE UNDERWOOD
17	17	SOUTHERN STYLE DARIUS RUCKER
18	19	OUTLAW IN ME THE LACS
19	25	THE FIRST TIME KELSEA BALLERINI
20	14	SUMMER FOREVER BILLY CURRINGTON
21	21	BRINGING BACK THE SUNSHINE BLAKE SHELTON
22	24	IGNITE THE NIGHT CHASE RICE
23	—	WHILE THE GETTIN' IS GOOD COREY SMITH
24	20	THE BIG REVIVAL KENNY CHESNEY
25	27	COLE SWINDELL COLE SWINDELL

TOP 25 BILLBOARD SINGLES

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	2	SANGRIA BLAKE SHELTON
2	3	LITTLE TOY GUNS CARRIE UNDERWOOD
3	5	DIAMOND RINGS AND OLD BARSTOOLS TIM MCGRAW WITH CATHERINE DUNN
4	6	TONIGHT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU JASON ALDEAN
5	4	BABY BE MY LOVE SONG EASTON CORBIN
6	1	LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT KELSEA BALLERINI
7	7	LOVE YOU LIKE THAT CANAAN SMITH
8	9	GIRL CRUSH LITTLE BIG TOWN
9	10	ONE HELL OF AN AMEN BRANTLEY GILBERT
10	12	KISS YOU IN THE MORNING MICHAEL RAY
11	13	KICK THE DUST UP LUKE BRYAN
12	11	CRUSHIN' IT BRAD PAISLEY
13	15	LOVING YOU EASY ZAC BROWN BAND
14	14	YOUNG & CRAZY FRANKIE BALLARD
15	16	HELL OF A NIGHT DUSTIN LYNCH
16	18	HOUSE PARTY SAM HUNT
17	17	LIKE A WRECKING BALL ERIC CHURCH
18	19	CRASH AND BURN THOMAS RHETT
19	20	BUY ME A BOAT CHRIS JANSON
20	21	LOSE MY MIND BRETT ELDRIDGE
21	22	FLY MADDIE & TAE
22	29	JOHN COUGAR, JOHN DEERE, JOHN 3:16 • KEITH URBAN
23	23	GONNA WANNA TONIGHT CHASE RICE
24	24	I'M TO BLAME KIP MOORE
25	25	REAL LIFE JAKE OWEN

TOP 10 AMERICANA AIRPLAY

TW	LW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	1	SOMETHING MORE THAN FREE JASON ISBELL
2	2	THE TRAVELING KIND EMMYLOU HARRIS & RODNEY CROWELL
3	3	DJANGO AND JIMMIE WILLIE NELSON & MERLE HAGGARD
4	8	STILL RICHARD THOMPSON
5	4	SOUND & COLOR ALABAMA SHAKES
6	5	SECOND HAND HEART DWIGHT YOAKAM
7	6	THE RUFFIAN'S MISFORTUNE RAY WYLIE HUBBARD
8	7	TRAVELLER CHRIS STAPLETON
9	9	SUNDOWN OVER GHOST TOWN EILEEN JEWELL
10	10	THE TRAVELER RHETT MILLER

SOURCE: AMERICANA AIRPLAY CHART

rdio TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY SONGS*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	DIME STORE COWGIRL KACEY MUSGRAVES
2	TAKE YOUR TIME SAM HUNT
3	GIRL CRUSH LITTLE BIG TOWN
4	SANGRIA BLAKE SHELTON
5	LIKE A WRECKING BALL ERIC CHURCH

TOP 5 TRENDING COUNTRY/AMERICANA/SOUTHERN ALBUMS*

TW	TITLE / ARTIST
1	ABOUT TO GET REAL EASTON CORBIN
2	THEN CAME THE MORNING THE LONE BELLOW
3	SETH AVETT & JESSICA MAYFIELD SING ELLIOTT SMITH • SETH AVETT & JESSICA MAYFIELD
4	LYNYRD SKYNYRD LYNYRD SKYNYRD
5	THE OUTSIDERS ERIC CHURCH

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Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
Friendly Return Policy ¹	30 days	30 days

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THOMAS RHETT



ERIC CHURCH with Pete and
Ali Brayton of Pearland, Texas



DIERKS BENTLEY with Eddie
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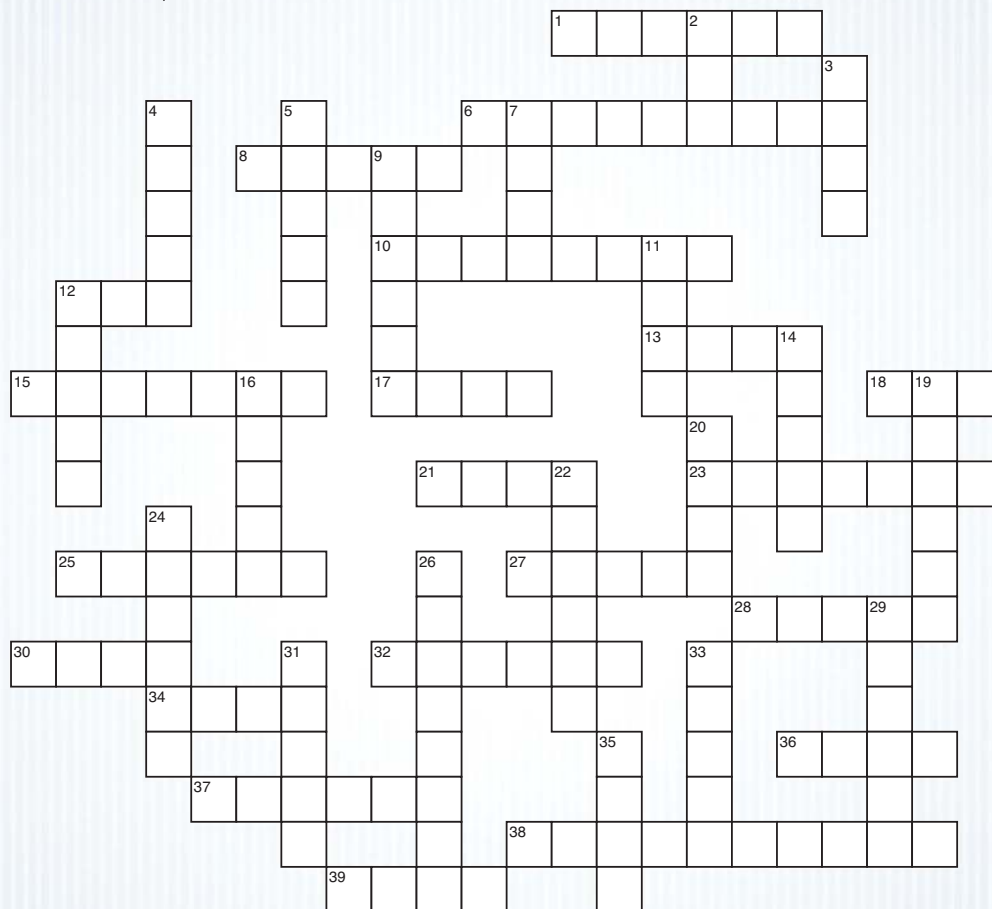
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|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 "_____ Morning Church" | 25 Wife _____ |
| 6 Album <i>Under the</i> _____ | 27 "Gone _____" |
| 8 Sister _____ | 28 Sister _____ |
| 10 "_____ in Montgomery" | 30 "_____ Country" |
| 12 "Country _____" | 32 Sister _____ |
| 13 "_____ Time" | 34 "I'd _____ You All Over Again" |
| 15 "It's Five O' Clock Somewhere" song partner | 36 Daughter _____ |
| 17 Mama _____ | 37 Daughter _____ |
| 18 Daughter _____ | 38 Alan's band The _____ |
| 21 "There _____" | 39 Album <i>Thirty Miles</i> _____ |
| 23 Nephew's duo The _____ | |

DOWN

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2 "A Million Ways to _____ in the West" | 19 "_____ Man" |
| 3 Daddy _____ | 20 "As She's Walking _____" |
| 4 "Little _____" | 22 "Murder on Music Row" song partner |
| 5 Sister _____ | 24 Album _____ and <i>Alcohol</i> |
| 7 "Chasin' That _____ Rainbow" | 26 "Work in _____" |
| 9 "Hard Hat and a _____" | 29 Raised in _____, Georgia |
| 11 Album _____ <i>Mileage</i> | 31 Longtime producer Stegall |
| 12 "Mercury _____" | 33 Wrote a song in her memory |
| 14 "Between the _____ and Me" | 35 "_____ in the Real World" |
| 16 "Tall, Tall _____" | |

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Wings - 00026**
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"I'd rather be with my grandkids." - 00437**
Leather Cover and Labels - 00437 ★

**Footprints w/verse "One
night I dreamed that I was walking along
the beach with the Lord." - 00257**
Fabric Cover and Labels - 00257 ★

Angel Kisses - 00019
Leather Cover and Labels - 00019 ★

**Thomas Kinkadee's Faith for All
Seasons w/verse "Believe all things are possible
with God." - 00105**
Leather Cover and Labels - 00105 ★

**Comical Cats w/verse
"Blossoming with Purr-sonality!" - 00570**
Leather Cover and Labels - 00570 ★

**Lena Liu's Floral
Borders - 00088 w/optional verse
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from our friends.*



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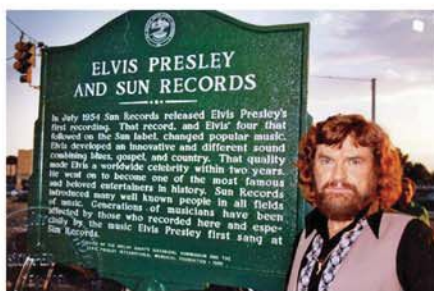
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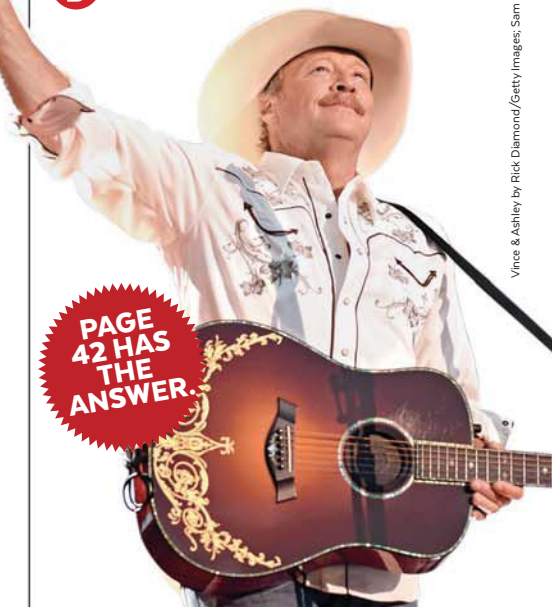
"When I saw the title, 'Drinkin' Town With a Football Problem,' I couldn't wait to hear the song. It was just a good twist. Every small town I've ever been in through all my years of touring, they are all in love with football and their drinks. It's everywhere, not just the South like everyone thinks. From beginning to end, the song just felt happy and it moved me."

BILLY CURRINGTON

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- A** "HERE IN THE REAL WORLD"
- B** "THAT'D BE ALRIGHT"
- C** "CHASIN' THAT NEON RAINBOW"
- D** "GONE COUNTRY"

**PAGE
42 HAS
THE
ANSWER.**





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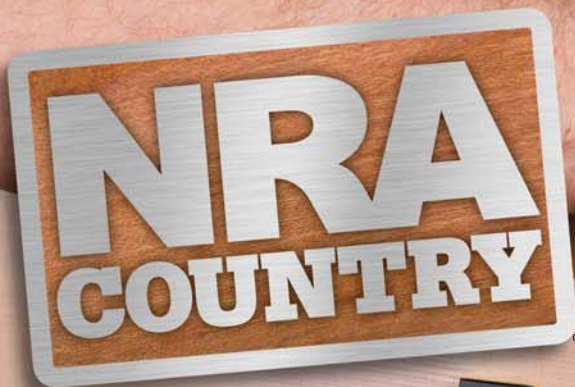
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